

2013 artist

Digital Painting Magazine
Issue 089 May 2013

Interview

Blaz Porenta

Articles

Sketchbook of
John Thacker

The Gallery

Bruno Hamzagic,
Evan Lee,
plus more!

In the third part of the
Costume Design series,
Richard Tilbury creates
two different designs
for Religious Leaders.
They're excellent!

COSTUME DESIGN

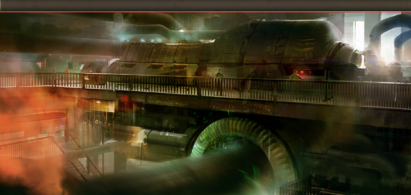
RELIGIOUS LEADER

Cover Image by Richard Tilbury



Fire Truck

The Off World Vehicles series comes to a close, with **Mike Hill** showing us how he created his vehicle, the Fire Truck.



Designing New Worlds

In the penultimate part of this series, **Gerhard Mozsi** paints an Industrial Facility, and shares techniques on how to create your own for your world.



Creating Original Creatures

The final part of **Vinod Rams'** series on Creature Anatomy features an original creature and tips for designing your own.



Editorial

Hello and welcome to the May issue of 2D Artist! We hope you all had a great April. We definitely enjoyed it here in the UK, with national holidays left right and center, giving us a nice selection of days off to enjoy the long overdue sunny weather, and lap up some inspiration. It may be tempting to get outside and enjoy some sunshine,

but if you would rather stay inside and get some painting done, 2D Artist is full to the brim with outstanding content and jaw-dropping tutorials to provide all the inspiration you need!

In our vibrant tutorial section this month we continue to bring you visually stunning work from some of the most exciting names in the digital world. **Vinod Rams** shares tips and techniques to successfully create original creature designs.

In this penultimate installment of our New Worlds tutorial series, **Gerhard Mozzi** examines the industrial core of the society in the world he has created, as well as demonstrating the process behind using light and color to create atmosphere.

We also continue our Costume Design and Off World Vehicles series, which see **Richard Tilbury** design a defined costume for a religious leader, and **Mike Hill** create a concept for a fire-fighting truck by exploring the use of a 3D block-in to define the forms. It's the very last chapter of our Off World Vehicles series, so make sure you don't miss out!

Illustrator and digital painter **Khasis Lieb** draws inspiration from the absinthe drinkers of France and takes us through some of the finer processes in painting his psychedelic portrait. This broad overview is full of useful tips on everything from the concept through to lighting.

If all that wasn't enough we also have an interview with awesomely talented concept artist **Blaz Porenta**, a whimsical sketchbook by **John Thacker** and our fantastic gallery, which features ten outstanding digital images from some very talented artists such as **Markus Lovadina**, **Bruno Hamzagic** and **Bastien Grivet**. Enjoy!

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Digital Art Masters: Volume 7 – Free Chapter

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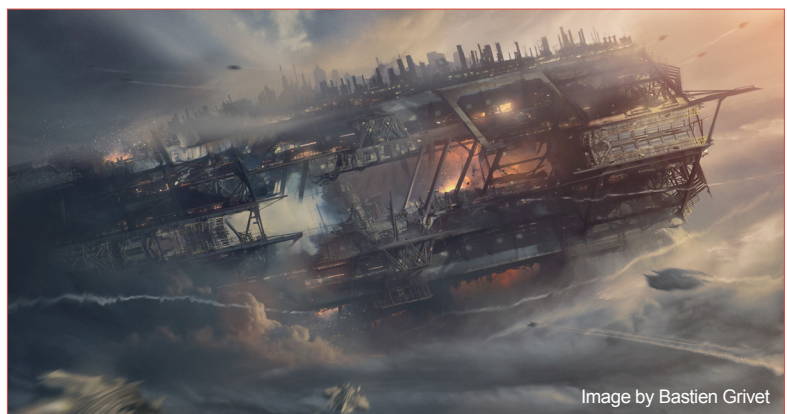


Image by Bastien Grivet



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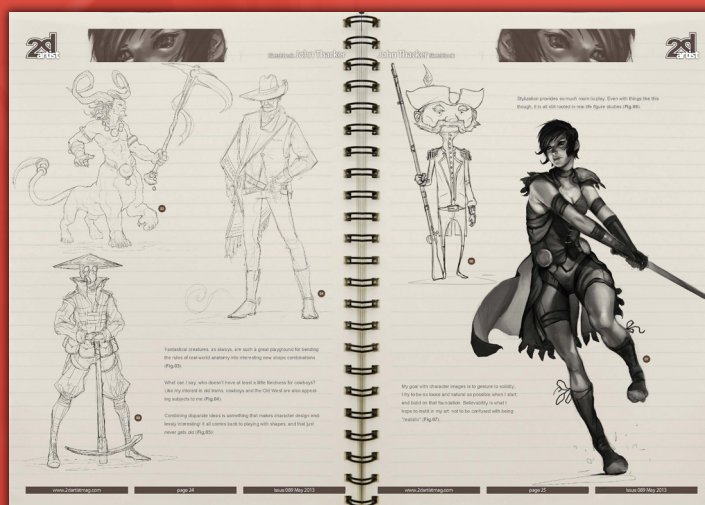
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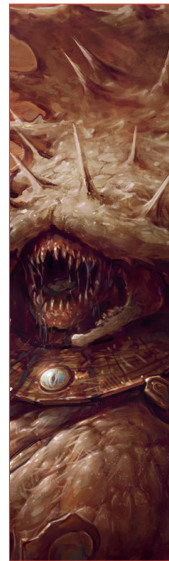
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Contributing Artists

Every month many artists from around the world contribute to **3DCreative** and **2DArtist** magazines. Here you can find out a bit more about them! If you would like to be a part of **3DCreative** or **2DArtist** magazine, please contact: jess@3dtotal.com

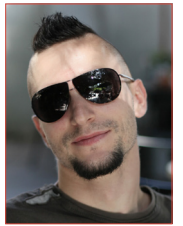


Blaz Porenta

As a child Blaz read thousands of fairy tales. Today he tells them himself but instead of writing them, he paints them.

Blaz likes to create a snapshot of his world for viewers, and let them create their own story.

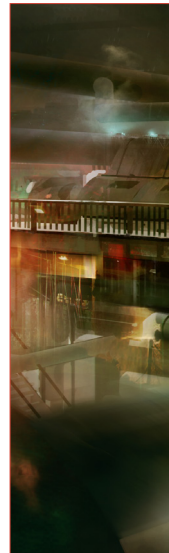
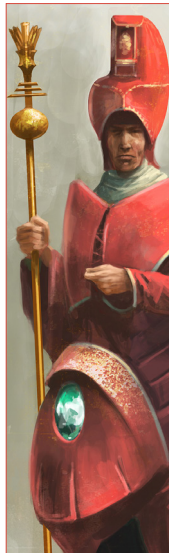
<http://www.blazporenta.com/>
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Richard Tilbury

Richard Tilbury has had a passion for drawing since being a couple of feet tall. He studied Fine Art and was eventually led into the realm of computers several years ago. His brushes have been dissolving in white spirit since the late nineties and his graphics tablet has become their successor. Richard still sketches regularly and now balances his time between 2D and 3D, although drawing will always be closest to his heart.

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ibex80@hotmail.com



Gerhard Mozsi

is an Australian artist who has worked both remotely and on-site for studios in the USA, Austria, Germany, Australia, and the UK. He studied traditional art at university before exchanging the paintbrush for a Wacom, and now works primarily in the digital medium. He has been working as a concept artist and matte painter for film and games development for the last years, and his work can be seen on his website and blog.

<http://www.gerhardmozsi.com/>
contact@gerhardmozsi.com

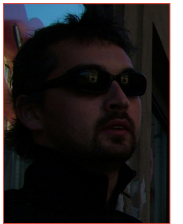


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"Keep practicing!
You can never be
too good."

INTERVIEW WITH

BLAZ PORENTA

It's been a while since we last spoke to the Blaz Porenta and a lot's changed in this talented concept artist's life over the last couple of years. He chats to us today about being part of the fantasy card game *Legend of the Cryptids*, leading a 3DTotal workshop and what he has to look forward to in the future.

Hi Blaz, how are you? I can't believe I'm saying this, but it's been over four years since your last interview with 2DArtist – time flies! For those who may not have read that interview could you tell us a bit about yourself as an artist?

My schedule is fully packed, but I couldn't be happier! Has it really been that long? I feel old now!

I am an illustrator, living in my little world of horror and fluffy animals – it depends on the day. I love to challenge myself by painting stories, portraying emotions and exploring traditional technique and styles in digital media along the way.

The last time we spoke you were working as Art Director for Actalogic. What have you been up to since then?

I am currently working as a full-time concept artist and painter at Outfit 7, a company most known for their *Talking Friends* app franchise. Not my typical horror genre, but I found myself really enjoying the variety of work I am getting there. I'm doing everything from creating new characters and environments for a kid audience, to working on video projects in collaboration with Disney. Then in my spare time at home, I



balance that with a couple of freelance projects, where I can fulfill my tendencies for some horror and fantasy paintings.

Since the last time you spoke to 2DArtist, what have been your favorite projects to work on?

I would like to point out a couple of them. One, for sure, was working on a series of well-known children stories for 3DTotal, portraying them in a horror fashion. That was a project I'd been planning to do on my own for a long time; I just needed a push.

The next one is currently ongoing: working on fantasy card game *Legend of the Cryptids* for a

Japanese client, Applibot. I choose a character of my choice, and then create my vision of him without the pressure of tight deadlines. I couldn't be happier!

And last but not least, a personal project that I am working on with two of my close friends: a mobile app game named *Swamp Attack*. It is an indie game in its final stage of development, and I hope we'll be able to find a publisher for it soon, or release it on our own.

You told us a bit about where you'd like to see yourself in ten years' time and you mentioned attending some great workshops. You're about to be on the other side of that



as you are leading a workshop for 3DTotal soon – could tell us a bit about it?

That is true. I didn't expect that at all, but it was a really nice surprise and honor to get an invitation. I am really looking forward to sharing my experiences with other artists, helping them and of course, learning from them as well. I'll be focusing on how to use colors and composition to create an atmosphere in a narrative painting. I know there will be some awesome art from students at the end of that workshop and knowing I'll be a part of the journey of creating them gives me a great joy!

Could you tell us about any other projects you have coming up that you are really looking forward to?

I am getting quite a few offers for work on different card games lately, but since I am fully-booked with my ongoing aforementioned projects, I have to unfortunately decline them for now. I hope to do some more work for Applibot in the future, as well as maybe one or two more indie games for fun. Oh, and there is



also a comic book on the way, but I am always on the lookout for something challenging, so who knows what will find a way into my already hectic schedule!

Do you have any advice for people who want to get into the industry?

Don't stop at anything. I know many talented people who get easily unmotivated by not



getting the job they dream about on their first try. If you love doing it, do it on your own. Build a strong portfolio, work on smaller projects and post regularly on art forums and websites. I know from personal experience that many big companies, as well as smaller clients, are surfing through these forums and contacting artists for their next projects. And keep practicing! You can never be too good.





You've mentioned that you like to explore different techniques and styles. Could you tell us a bit about your workflow, process and the software you use?

My workflow varies from project to project. Sometimes I start with quick sketches, followed by line art drawings, a couple of variations (especially when working for clients), then blocking in tone values and finishing it with color. Yet another time I'll just go with the flow and start with abstract forms, spilling colors all over the place, searching for a story to pop out.

I love the look of traditional media paintings, where you can see the texture of the media and feel the personal touch of an artist. Although I paint mainly digitally, I strive to achieve these qualities and search for ways to imitate them. Although I use Photoshop throughout the whole process, my work usually ends up in ArtRage, where I apply some thick brush strokes and mix colors with a palette knife as a final touch.

You are involved in such a variety of areas, which of these areas do you enjoy the most?

Nowadays I enjoy every project I am working on. I am fortunate to have a variety of offers, so I can pick what interests me the most. I could



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say I prefer more complex fantasy and horror paintings, which take me anything from a week to a month to finish, but I also like to relax and do some cartoon-style characters. I love when everything is balanced and I can do two different types of project at the same time, jumping from one to another, depending on how I feel.

Where do you draw your inspiration from?

That is always the hardest question for me, as I never think about it. I believe shapes and silhouettes are the most inspirational things. Our minds work in mysterious ways, and if you let your brain run free and don't limit it, you'll come up with some freaky stuff when looking at a pile





of garbage or something as simple as a cloud formation or a tile pattern on a bathroom floor.

I also follow many great artists and photographers, and build upon my reference library. I consider all of them my teachers, and I learn about the light, colors, composition and what works and what doesn't from a storytelling point of view from the work of others.

It's always good to take time out from work and reflect. What do you like to do to relax?

I love to spend my free time with my girlfriend, going to see a great movie or doing some adrenaline sports and martial arts.

Thanks for taking the time to talk to us!

Always a pleasure!

Blaz Porenta

Web: <http://blazporenta.blogspot.co.uk>

Email: blaz.porenta@gmail.com

Interviewed by: Jess Serjent-Tipping



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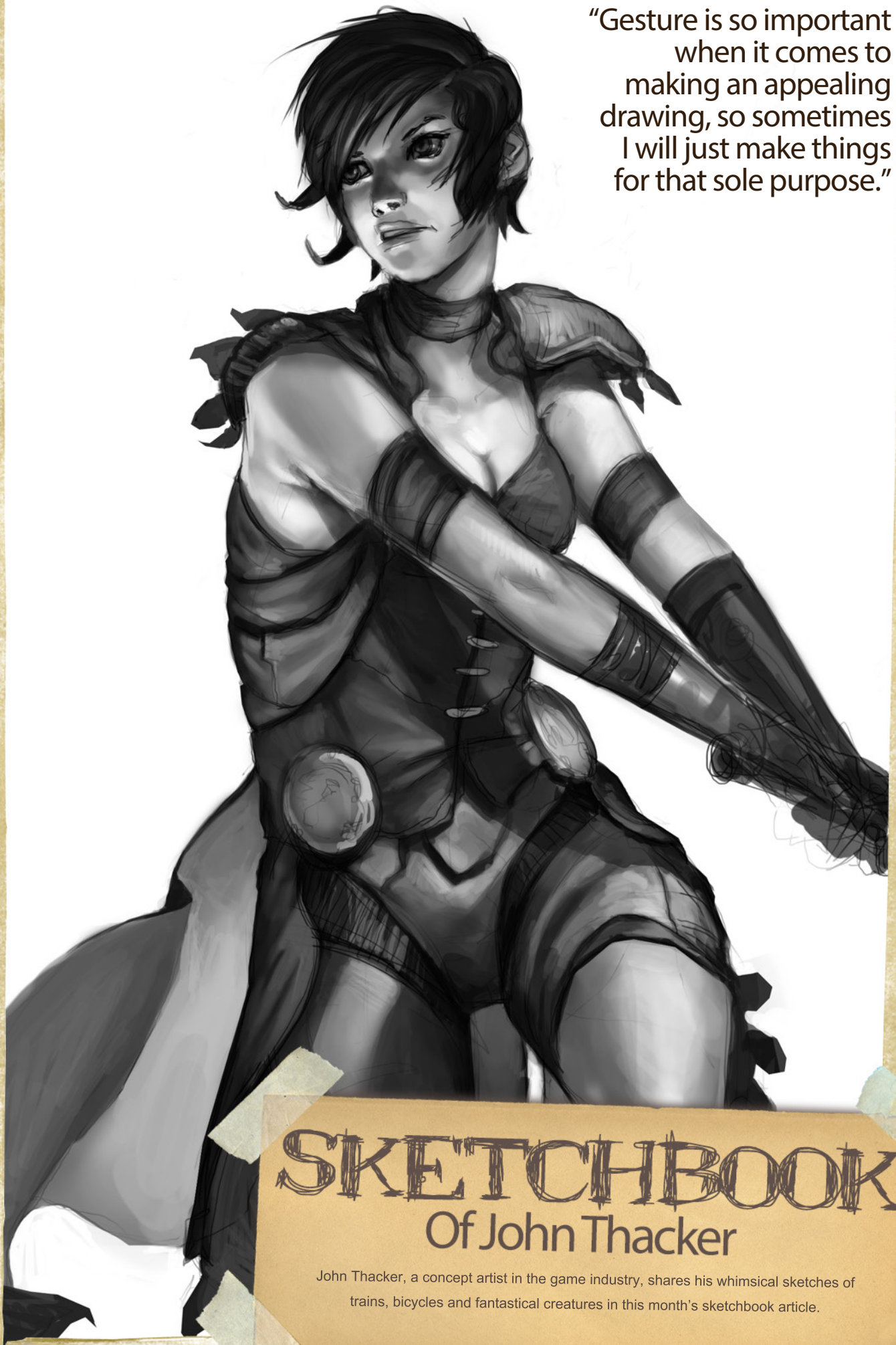
In this two volume series, Scott Patton shows the processes he uses to create a 3D character for feature films. The first volume explores Patton's fast and efficient method for concept sculpting, skipping the 2D sketch phase all together and designing the character entirely within ZBrush®. He covers everything from blocking out the forms and fleshing out the muscles, to adding props, detailing with alphas and posing the character. The second volume covers methods for creating a final color rendering using ZBrush and Photoshop®. Patton shows how he squeezes the most from ZBrush's powerful renderer to create both a wide and close-up shot of the character. He then shares creative Photoshop tips and tricks to quickly get to a finished piece of concept art from the ZBrush renders, covering topics such as adding and refining skin texture, hair, eyes, shadows and scars. Patton also discusses how to create backgrounds that enhance the character and overall composition.



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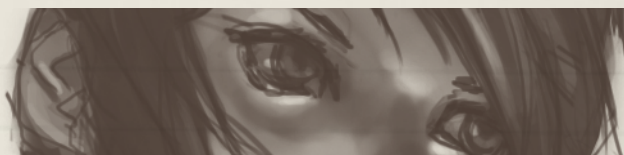
"Gesture is so important when it comes to making an appealing drawing, so sometimes I will just make things for that sole purpose."



SKETCHBOOK

Of John Thacker

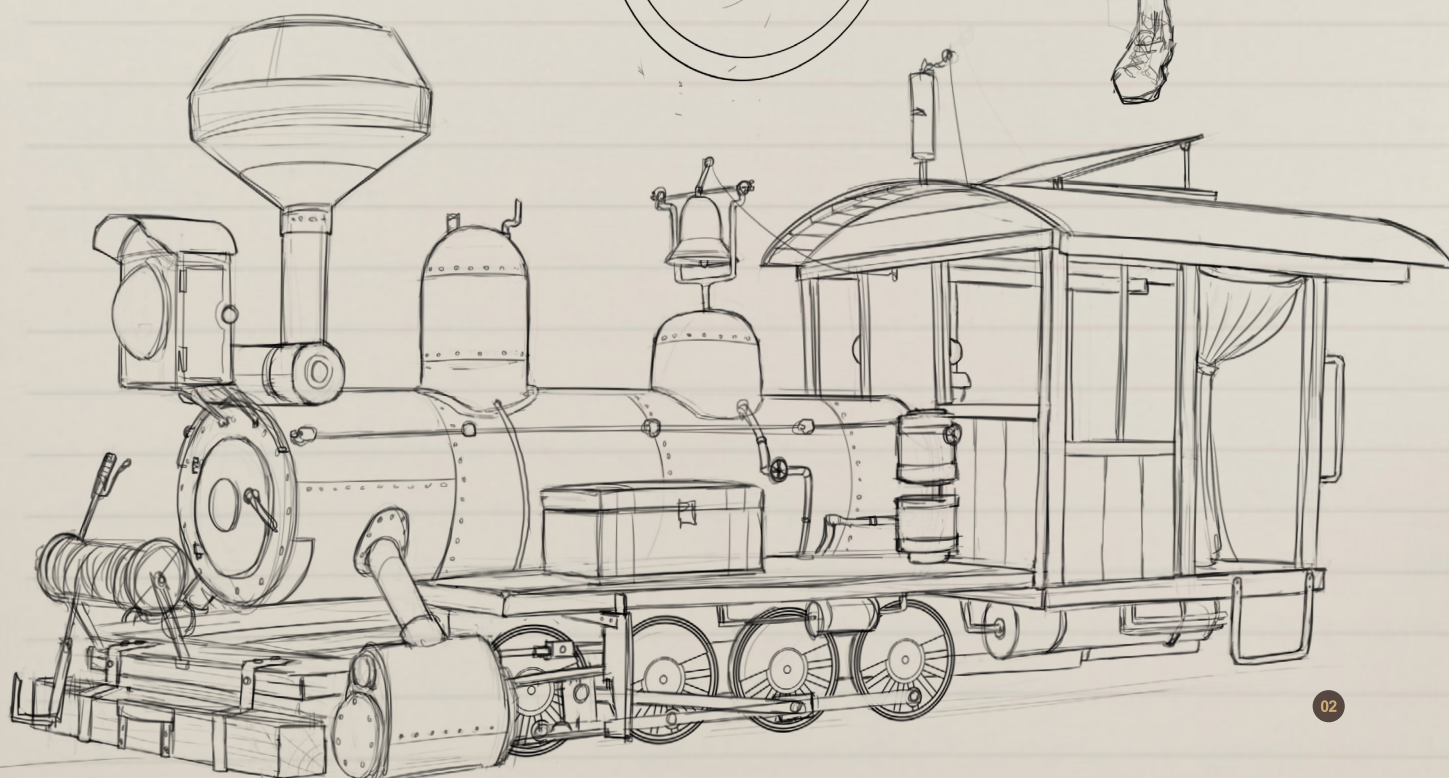
John Thacker, a concept artist in the game industry, shares his whimsical sketches of trains, bicycles and fantastical creatures in this month's sketchbook article.

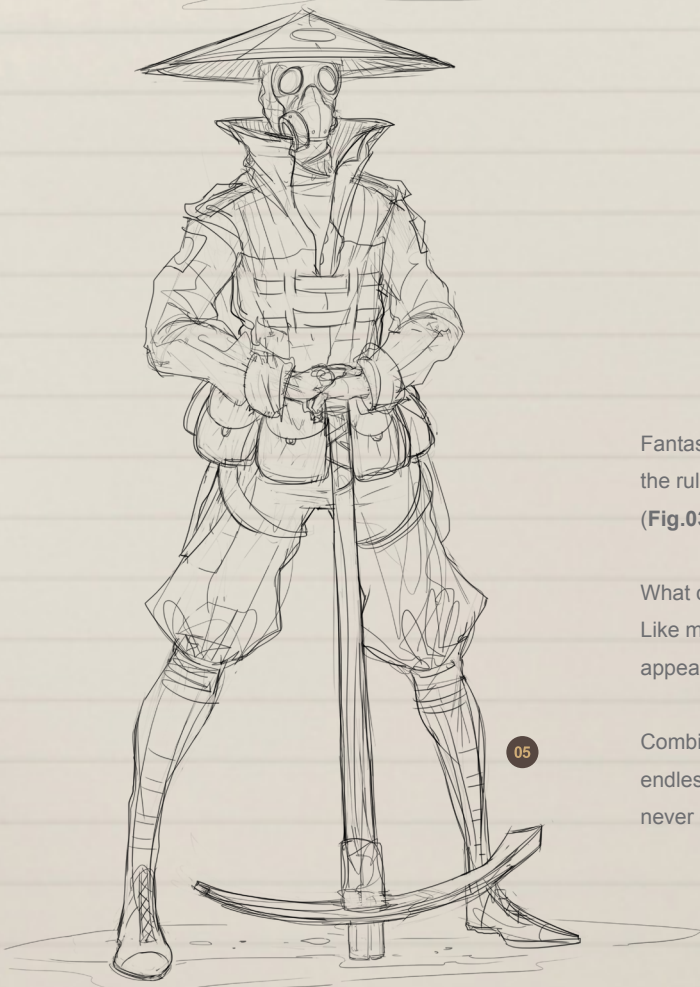
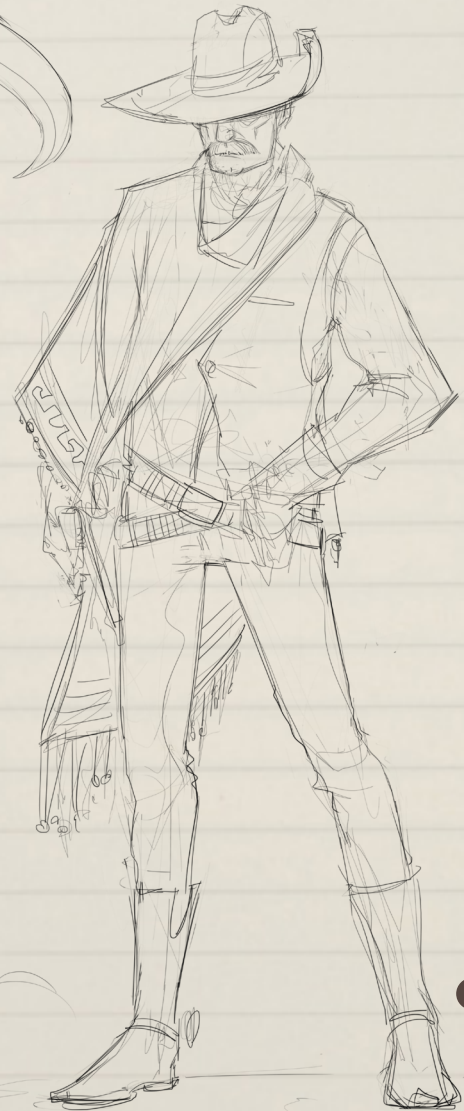
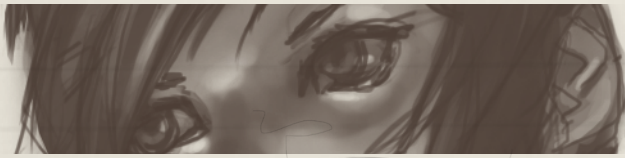


Sketchbook of John Thacker

I have always been interested in riding bicycles, so naturally I draw one from time to time (**Fig.01**).

I have a soft spot for whimsical things, and trains have always been a love of mine, especially steam engines from the early 1900s. The collection of shapes and details on these contraptions makes them such a great subject for playing with (**Fig.02**).

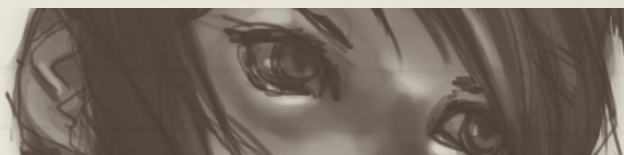




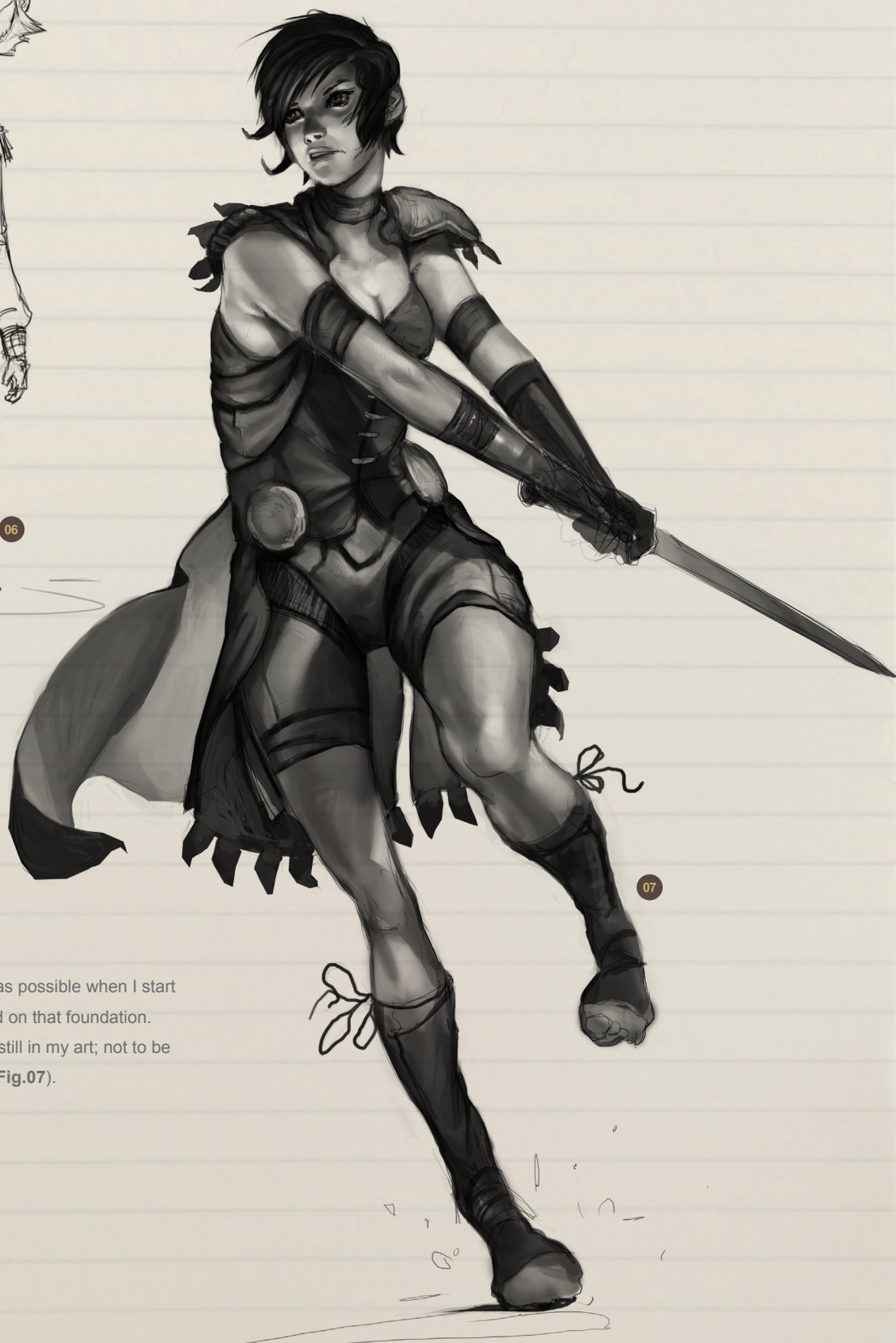
Fantastical creatures, as always, are such a great playground for bending the rules of real-world anatomy into interesting new shape combinations (Fig.03).

What can I say, who doesn't have at least a little fondness for cowboys? Like my interest in old trains, cowboys and the Old West are also appealing subjects to me (Fig.04).

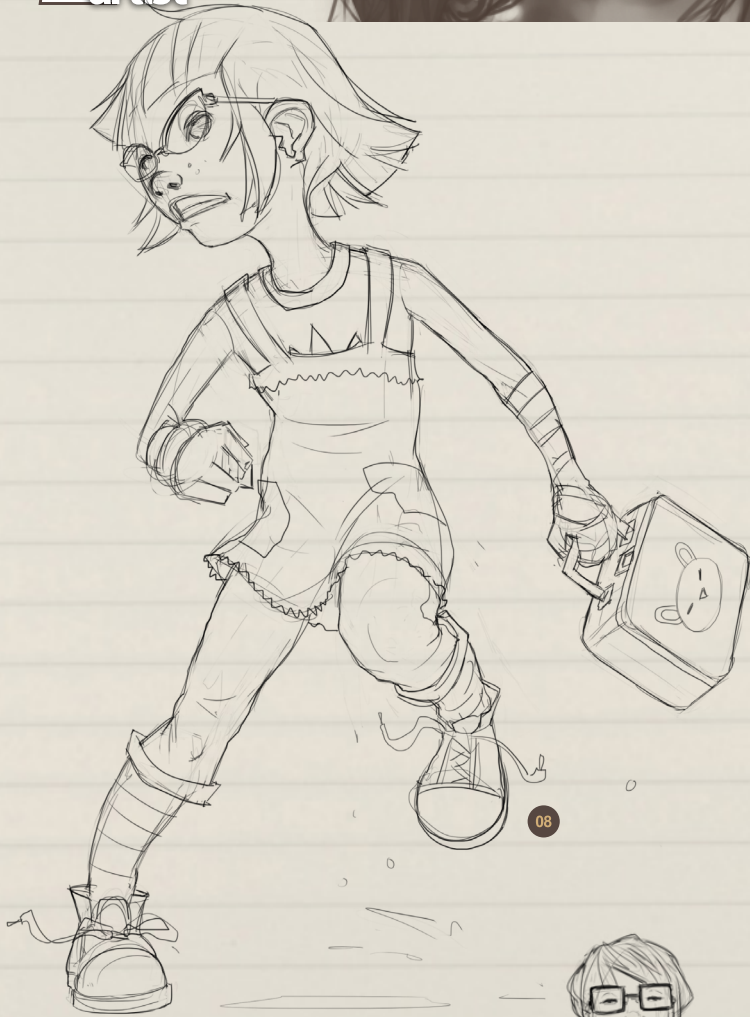
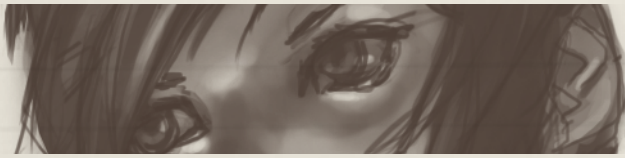
Combining disparate ideas is something that makes character design endlessly interesting. It all comes back to playing with shapes, and that just never gets old (Fig.05)!



Stylization provides so much room to play. Even with things like this though, it is all still rooted in real-life figure studies (**Fig.06**).



I try to be as loose and natural as possible when I start on a character design, and build on that foundation. Believability is what I hope to instill in my art; not to be confused with being "realistic" (**Fig.07**).



08



09

Gesture is so important when it comes to making an appealing drawing, so sometimes I will just make things for that sole purpose (Fig.08).

Drawing is fun... or least it should be! If I am feeling a little down, that may mean it is just time to draw an orc waiter ready to serve you some pie (Fig.09).

This is an example of how things evolve as I work on them. This started as a simple girl in a dress, and wound up becoming a zombie (though still in a dress) eating an apple (Fig.10).

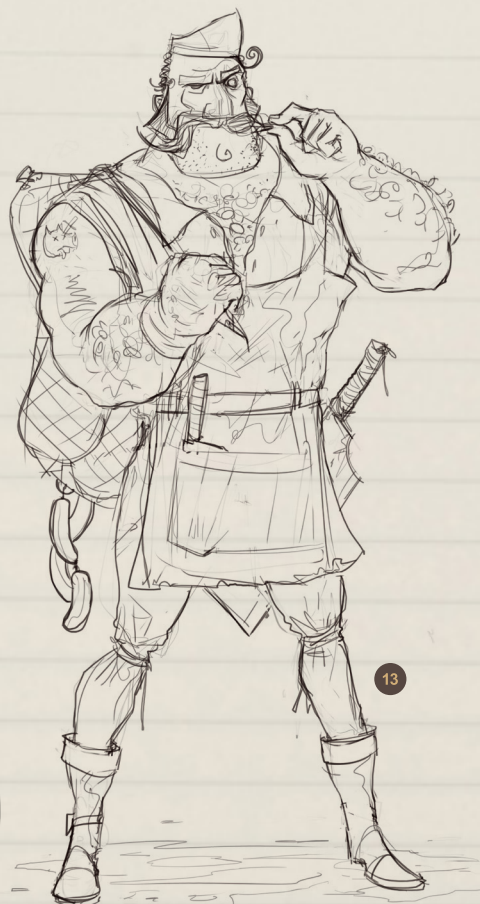
This sketch was inspired by a woman I saw at a bus stop when I was walking to work. I sometimes see little things about people that stick out, and even if I can't get it down visually where I am at the time, I hold onto it until I can draw it out later (Fig.11).



10



11



6-5-12

There is something especially nice about simplicity in design. There are times to push yourself, but I am always refreshed when working on fast, minimalistic pieces (Fig.12).

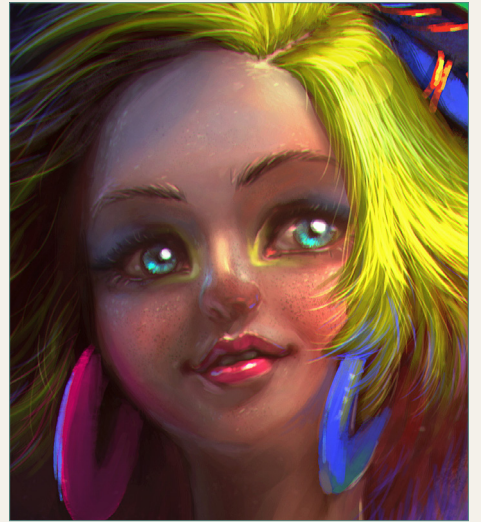
It is a good day when your time is spent drawing a moustache-twirling butcher (Fig.13). At least, by my standards – that is normal, right?

Thugs and goons never get old! I tend to get a feel for the world every character inhabits, if only in my mind, to guide my choices for design elements and proportions (Fig.14).

This was an experiment regarding using a soft brush and working angled surfaces off of each other. I try to push new methods so I don't get stuck doing the same thing over and over; if something is interesting I will learn that much faster (Fig.15).

John Thacker

Email: johnrthacker@yahoo.com



THE GALLERY

This month we feature: Jennifer Healy | Evan Lee | Titus Lunter | Bruno Hamzagic | Sayja
Bastien Grivet | Aekkarat Sumutchaya | Markus Lovadina | Arthur Haas | Mohamed Elgalad

Meeting

Arthur Haas

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(Right)



Few Steps Away

Kamil Murzyn

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(Below)



Detective

Muhammad Algalad

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Irvine the Coward

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Desert Empire

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Saramago

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BRUNO



Golden Lie

Jennifer Healy

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(Left)

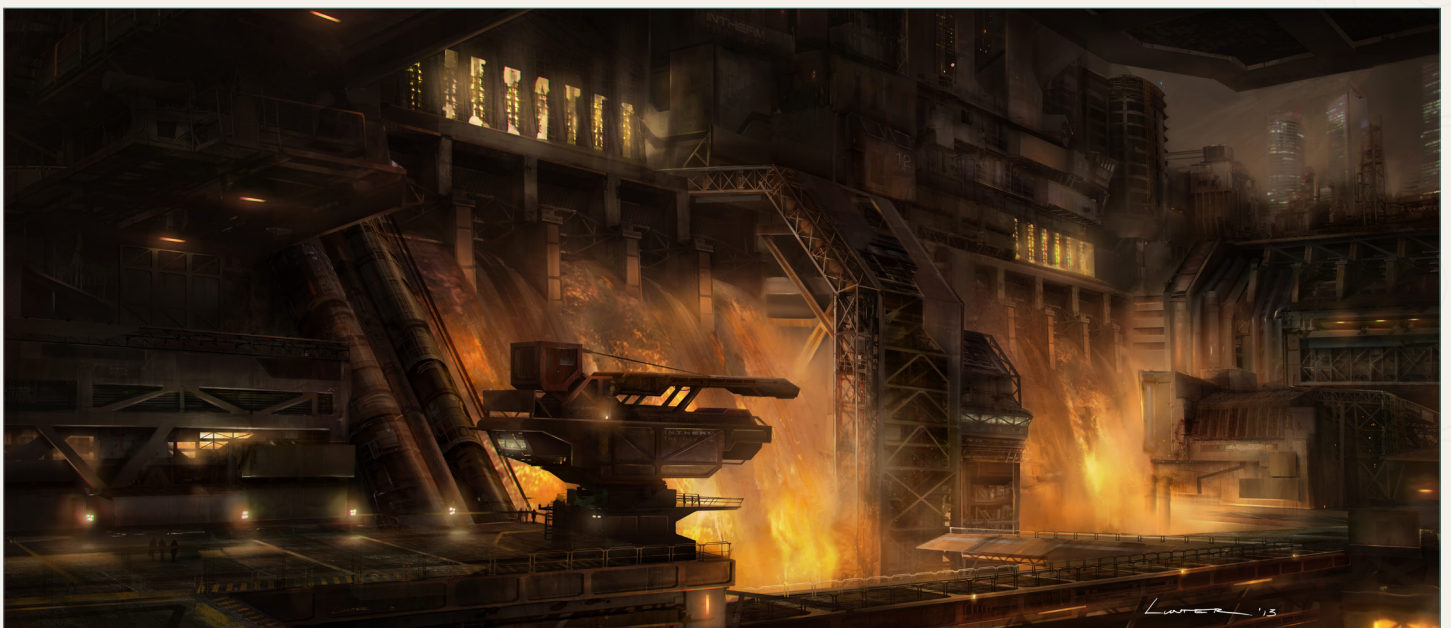
Thermal

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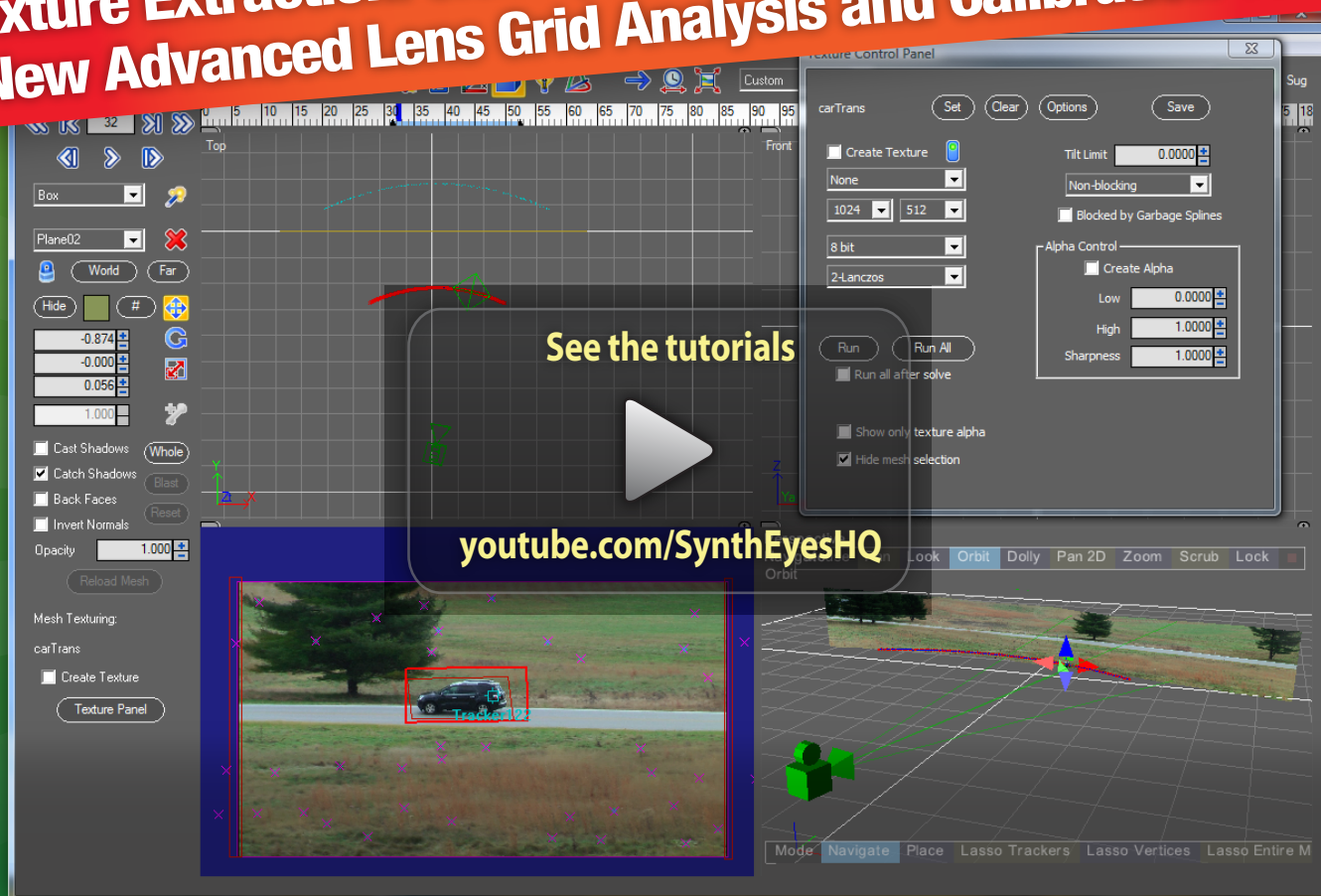




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OFF WORLD

VEHICLE DESIGN

CHAPTER 04



HEAVYUNITDESIGN.

The ability to sketch and render vehicles is an important asset in the field of concept design. In this tutorial series each artist has been given a brief description of a possible vehicle, which they will approach like a games brief to demonstrate the techniques used when creating a vehicle concept.

February Issue 086 Speeder March Issue 087 Deforestation April Issue 088 Personnel Carrier This Issue Fire Truck

Chapter 04 – Fire Truck

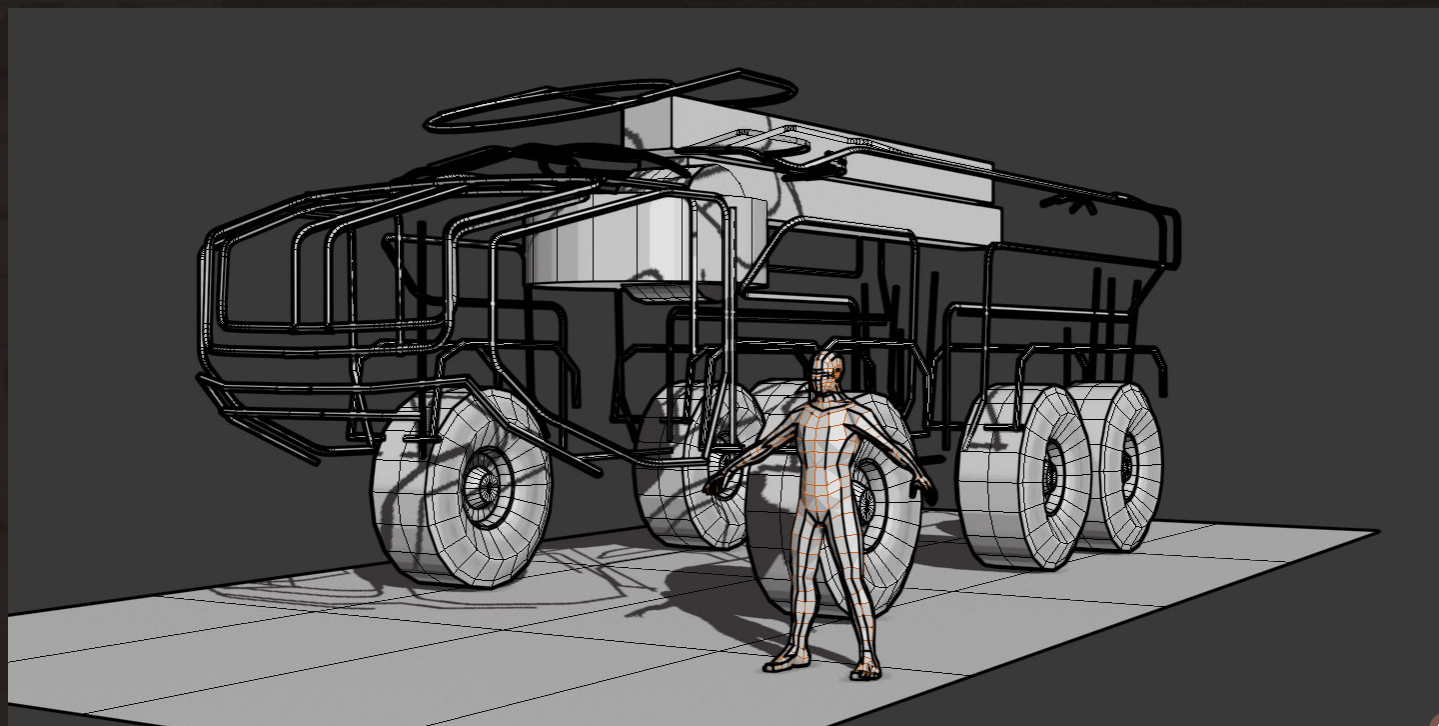
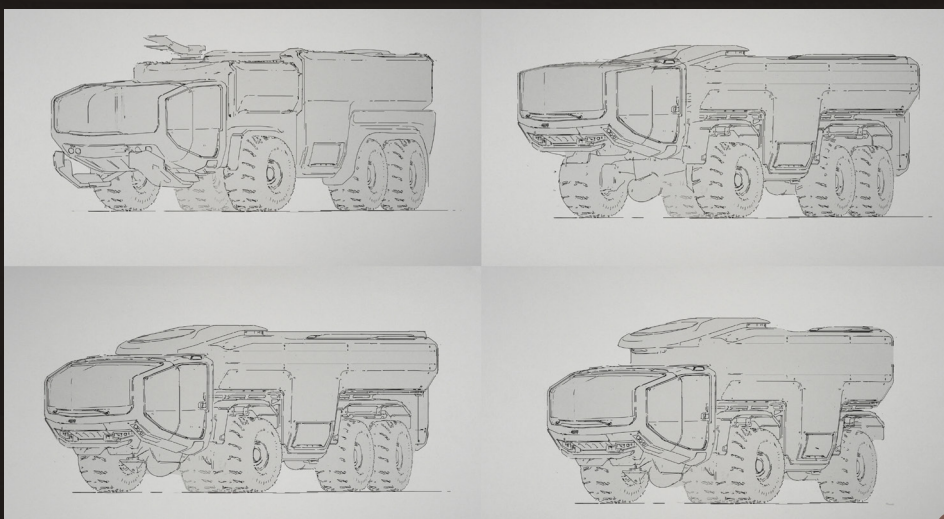
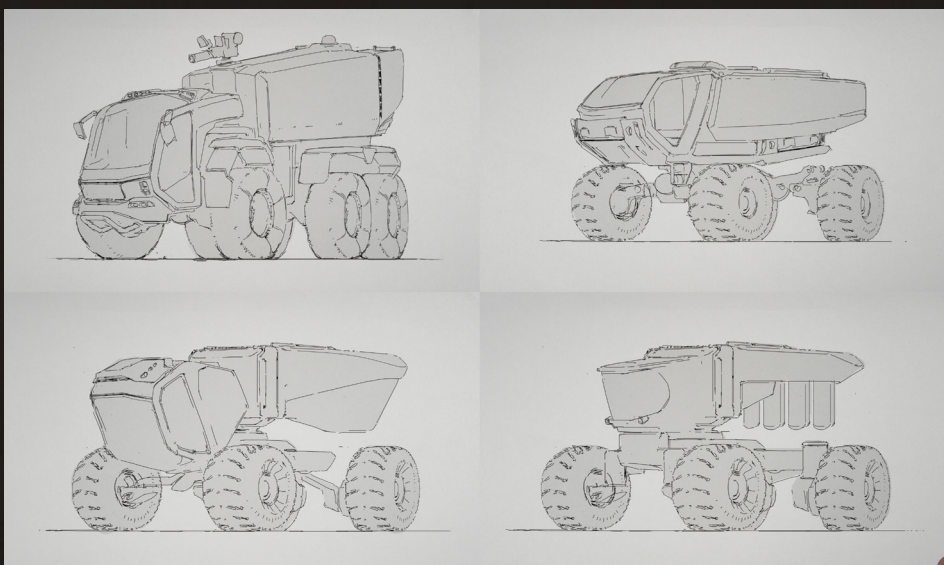
Software Used: Photoshop

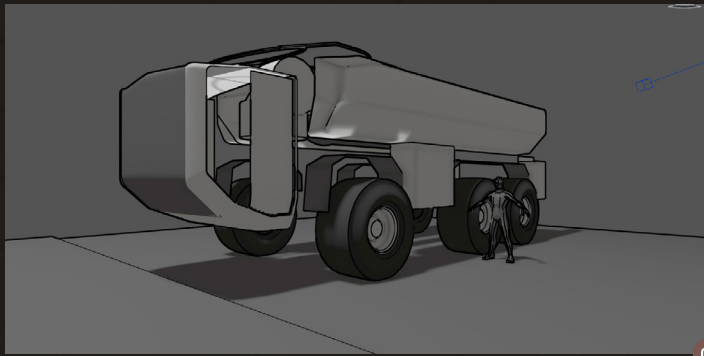
I was given a brief to design a firefighting vehicle that specializes in dealing with petrochemical fires. It must be capable of projecting water over large distances.

After the briefing, the first step for me is research and seeing existing designs in the real world. Google is your best friend in this department, and simply searching for key terms such as “fire truck” can get some good results.

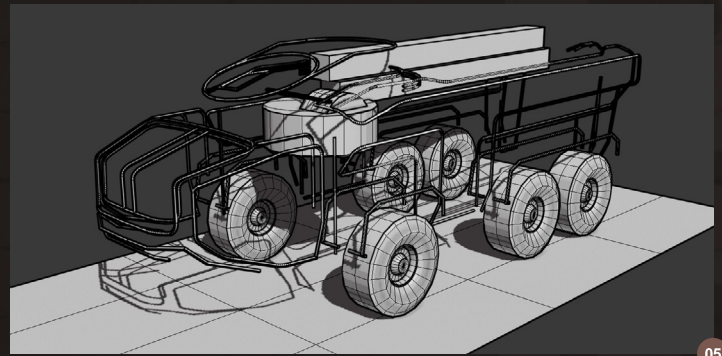
With limited time, and the freedom to select my own designs, I keep the thumbnail stage short. I see very quickly that the “playful” designs are not where I want to go – I would like to have a functional and believable vehicle – and I want my process to be iterative, so evolving through the process rather than limited to the original thumbnail. I like certain qualities in the more serious-looking machines, so the next step is to start (Fig.01 – 02).

At this stage, my interest is in getting a very good feel for the proportions of the design (Fig.03 – 04). With a 3D mesh in place, I can

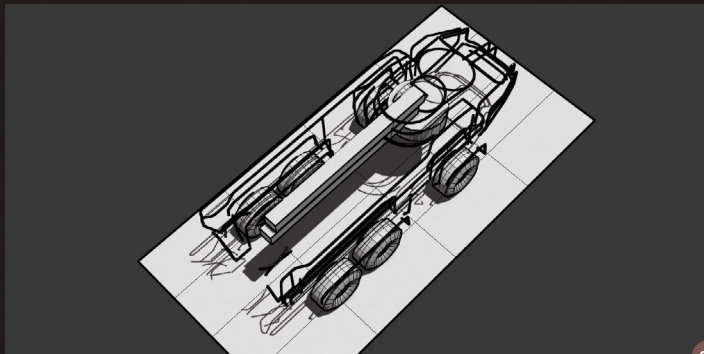




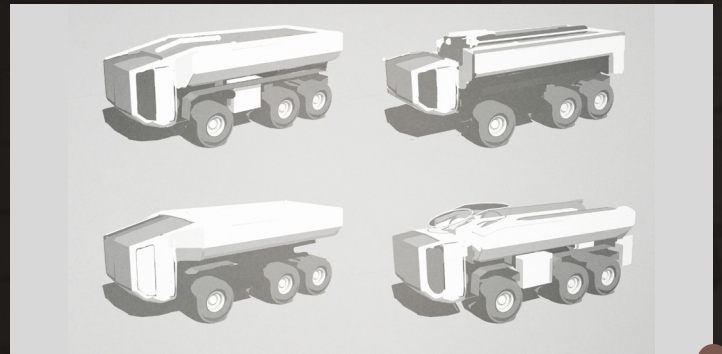
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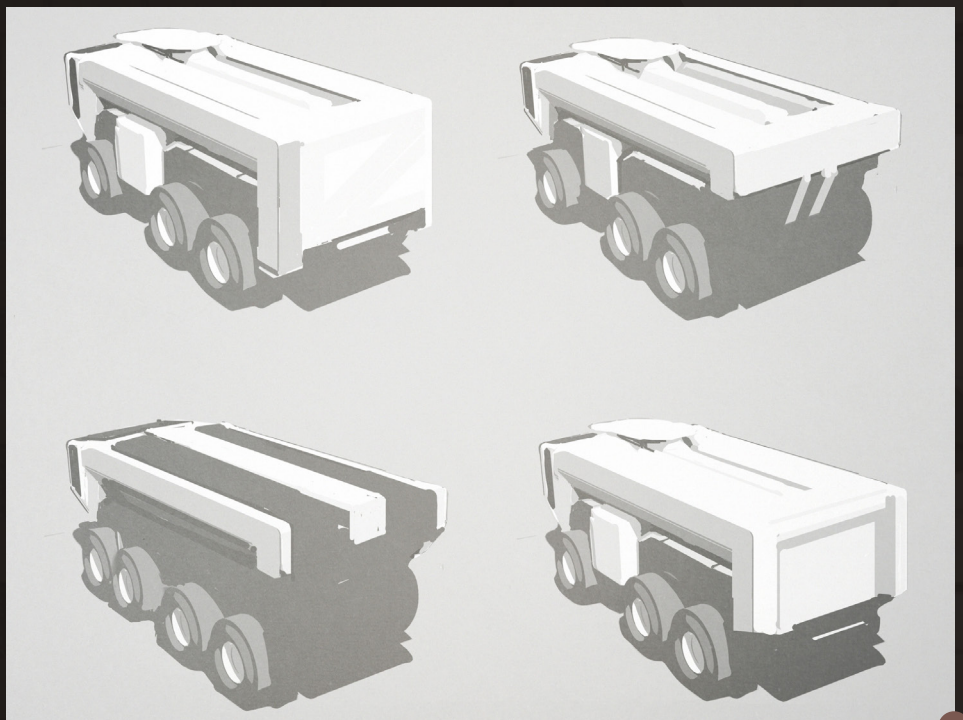
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also start to establish the space needed for suspension travel and wheel turning angles (Fig.05 – 06). I am happy with the general proportions, so I use the base mesh to start being a bit more playful with the formation of the shapes and seeing what is possible with a very rough value sketch (Fig.07).

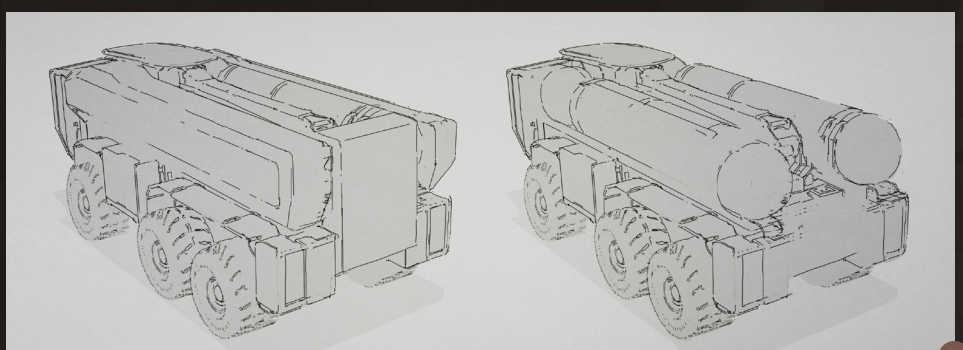
Even though the block-out is the basis for these paintovers, there are still a lot of small adjustments that can be made quickly in 2D to explore major design decisions, and then these can be implemented in the existing mesh (Fig.08).

I quickly strip off the top surface to understand what the outer shell will be encasing. This helps me understand the mechanical structure, which will be useful in the next steps.

I am not happy with the mass of the tanks here. If these tanks were full of liquid this machine would be extremely heavy and unstable. I want something more nimble, something lightweight and advanced; after all this is a concept vehicle! Looking at the proportions, I know I want to remove the massive tanks and replace them with something less dense (Fig.09).



08



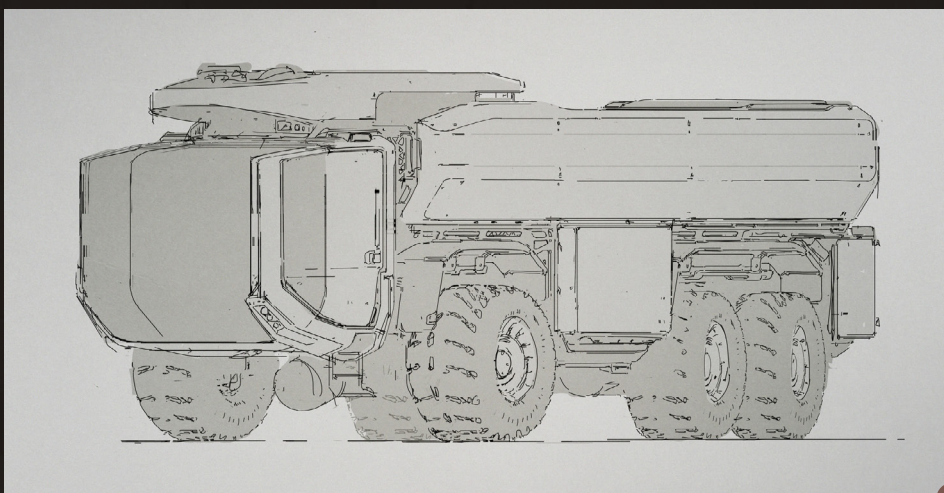
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I bring the design elements I have begun to establish back to the original sketch view, giving me a sense of whether the things I have learned in the block-out are compatible with my original idea. I'm happy at this point to start refining my concept mesh (**Fig.10**).

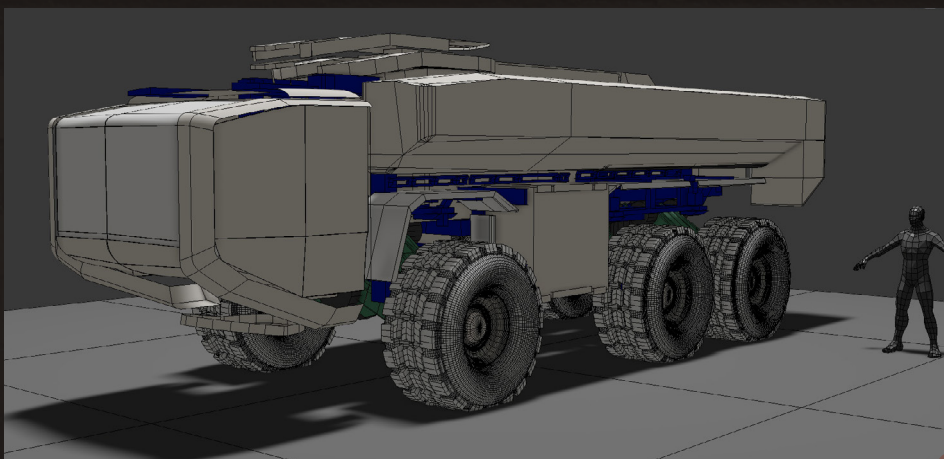
On a technical level, my mesh here is horrible – I am OK with this. The point of this mesh is not to have good topology; in fact, trying to be a disciplined modeler in the design stage is a waste of mental energy, so be messy if it helps you explore (**Fig.11**).

As I iterate, the final mesh will become more accurate as I see the design take shape and eventually I can refine it to a final high res model or hand it off to another technical artist to use as a 3D blueprint for a production model (**Fig.12**).

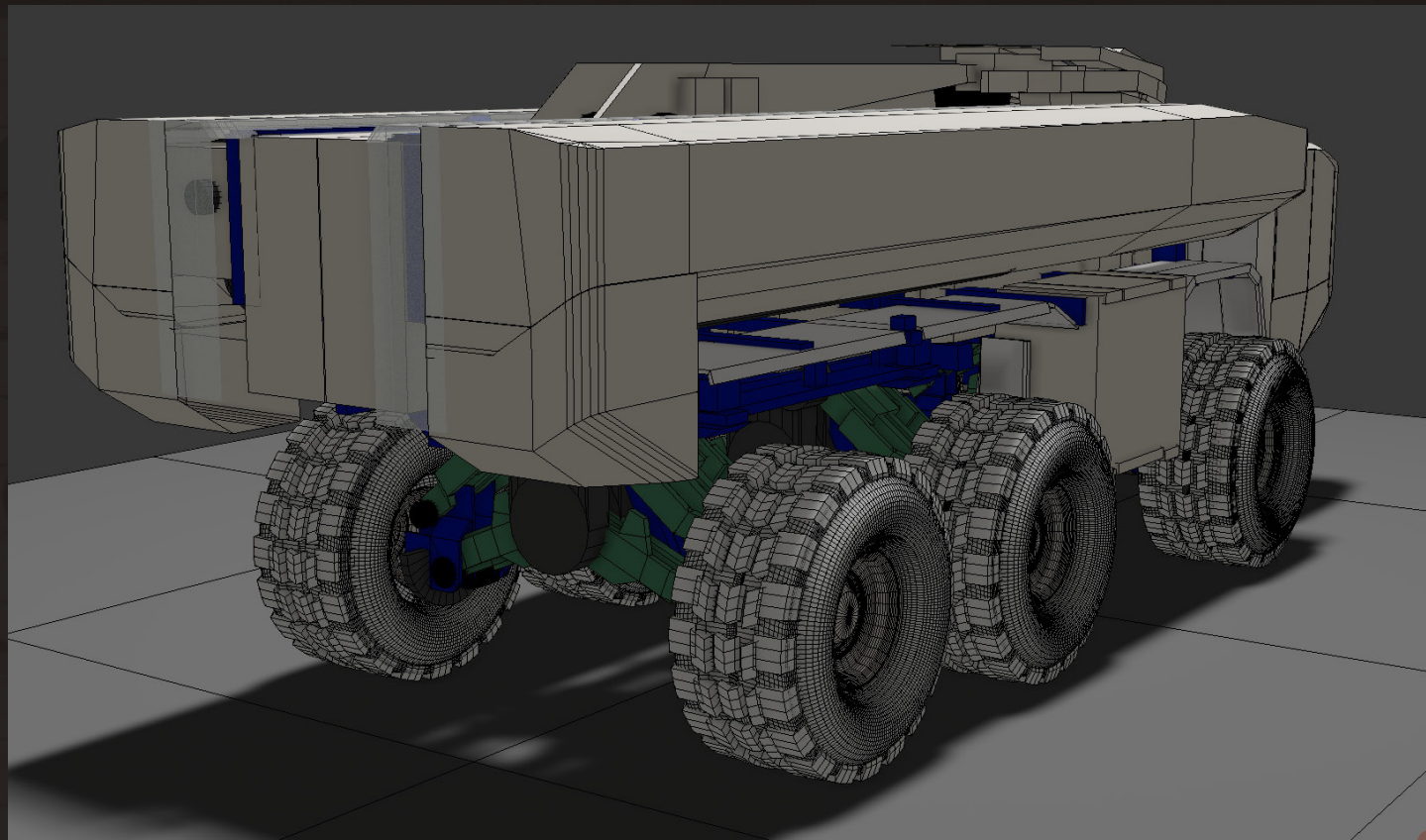
I use the mesh to test the extendable arm. This needs to make sense and just by testing the parameters of the arm movement I can be sure the design will make sense. I can also use these limitations to establish where servos and power



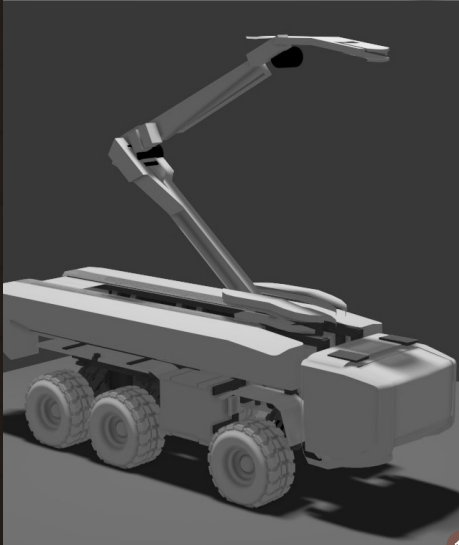
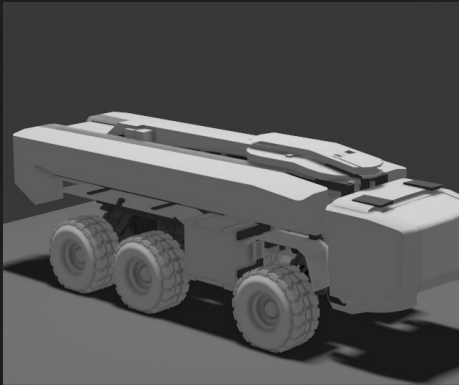
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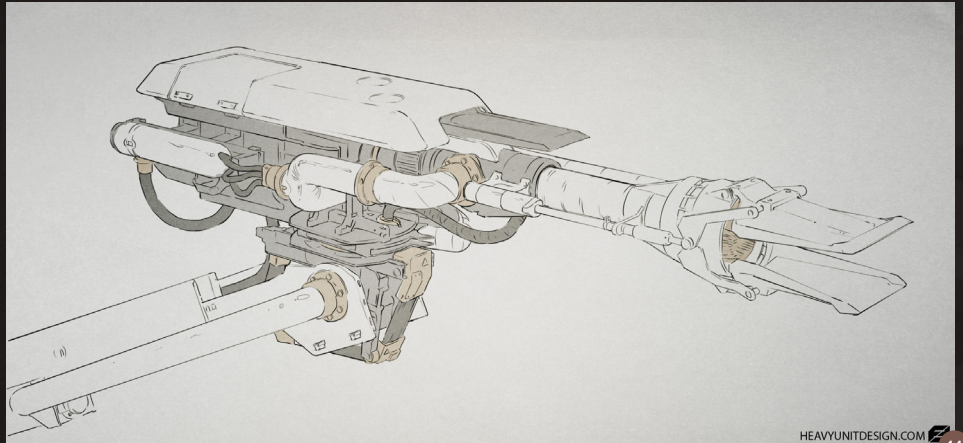
units etc., would be positioned to support this particular movement (**Fig.13**).

With the general layout of the design established, I zoom in and isolate specific components; in this case the nozzle of the hose (**Fig.14**).

Eventually (outside of this tutorial) I want to turn the design into a full-res model for a HD scene; this means there is no added benefit to doing any rendering at this stage, so I keep to simple line work and values.

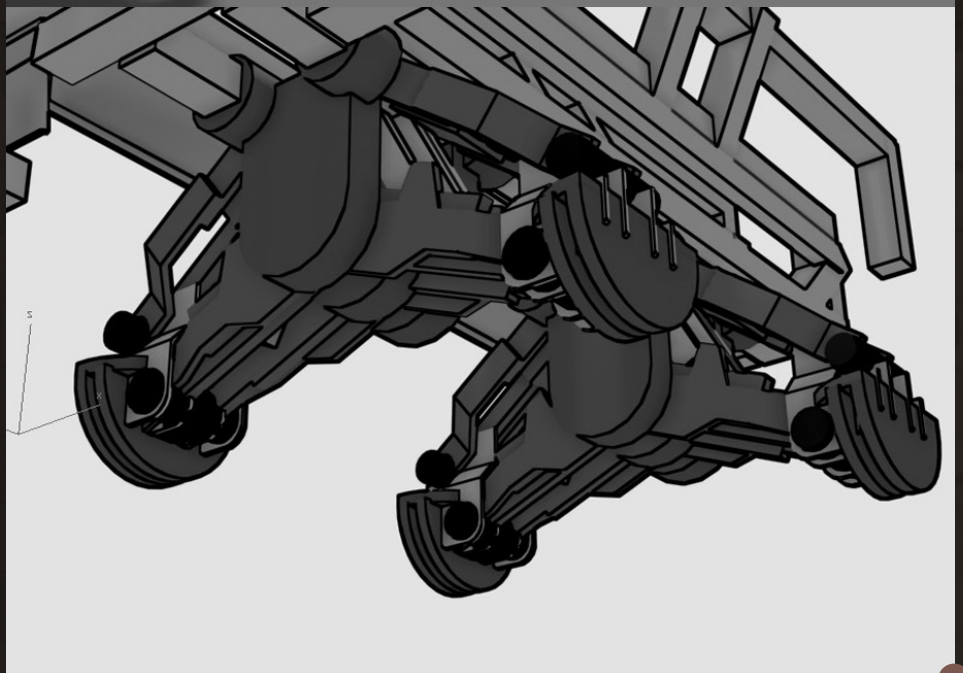
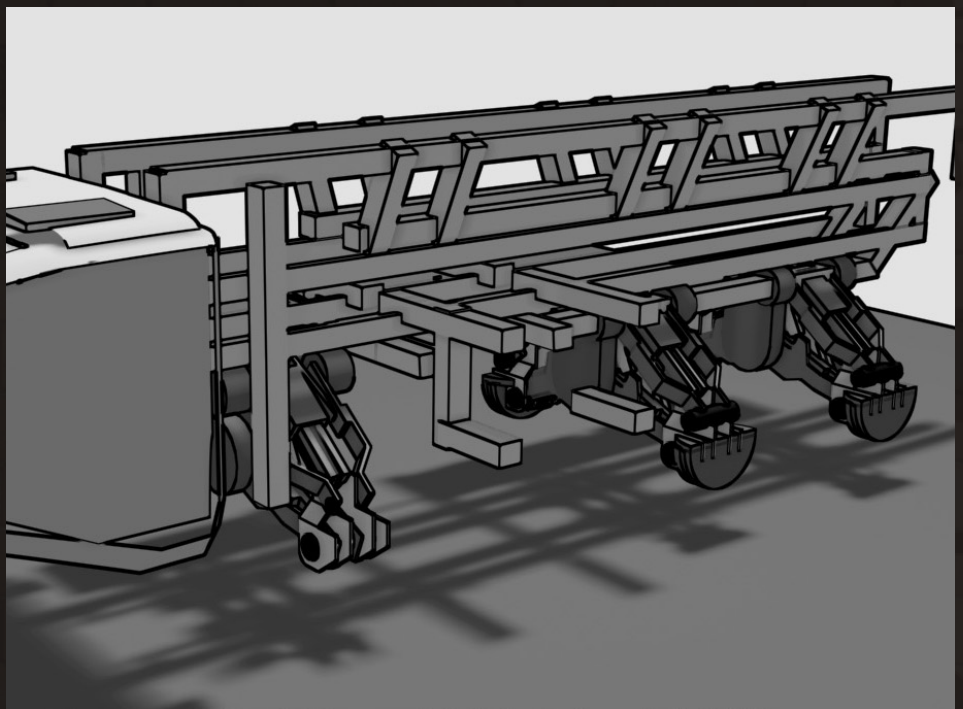
Ordinarily I would make a basic rig in 3D to confirm all the pivot points and get the movement working, but due to running out of time on this project, I am simply faking the suspension design (**Fig.15**).

I'm quite keen on "strap" technology at the moment, so I use this here instead of the traditional pistons; I quite like the chunky, almost

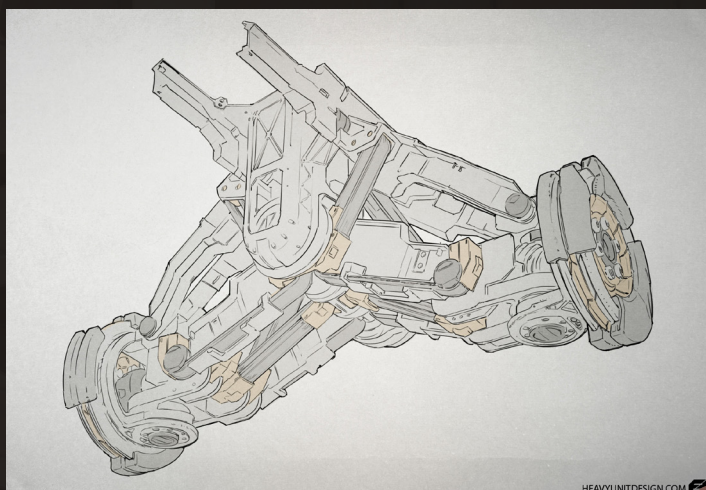


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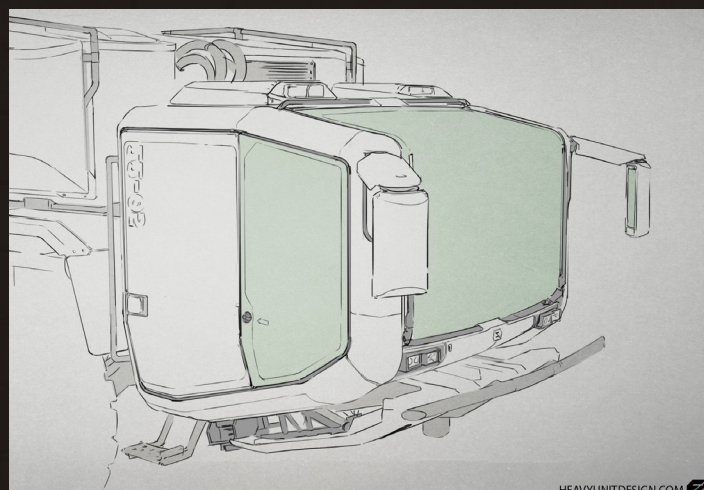
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cartoony element it gives to what is seen as an industrial subject (Fig.16).

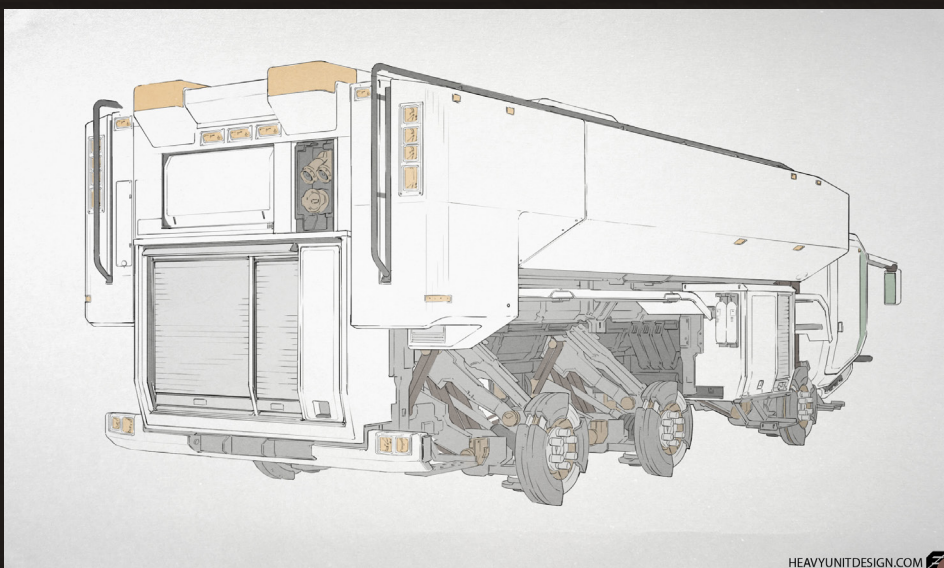
I begin doing some suggestive line work over screenshots of my mesh. I do this to quickly define what will be happening with panels, doors and windows, etc (Fig.17).

This style is intentionally loose; I want to suggest a certain approach quickly and can feed this knowledge back into the mesh/paint later on. To get a good sense of the design features I make a line work of the reverse three-quarter view. Again, nothing too detailed, but containing informative structural information (Fig.18).



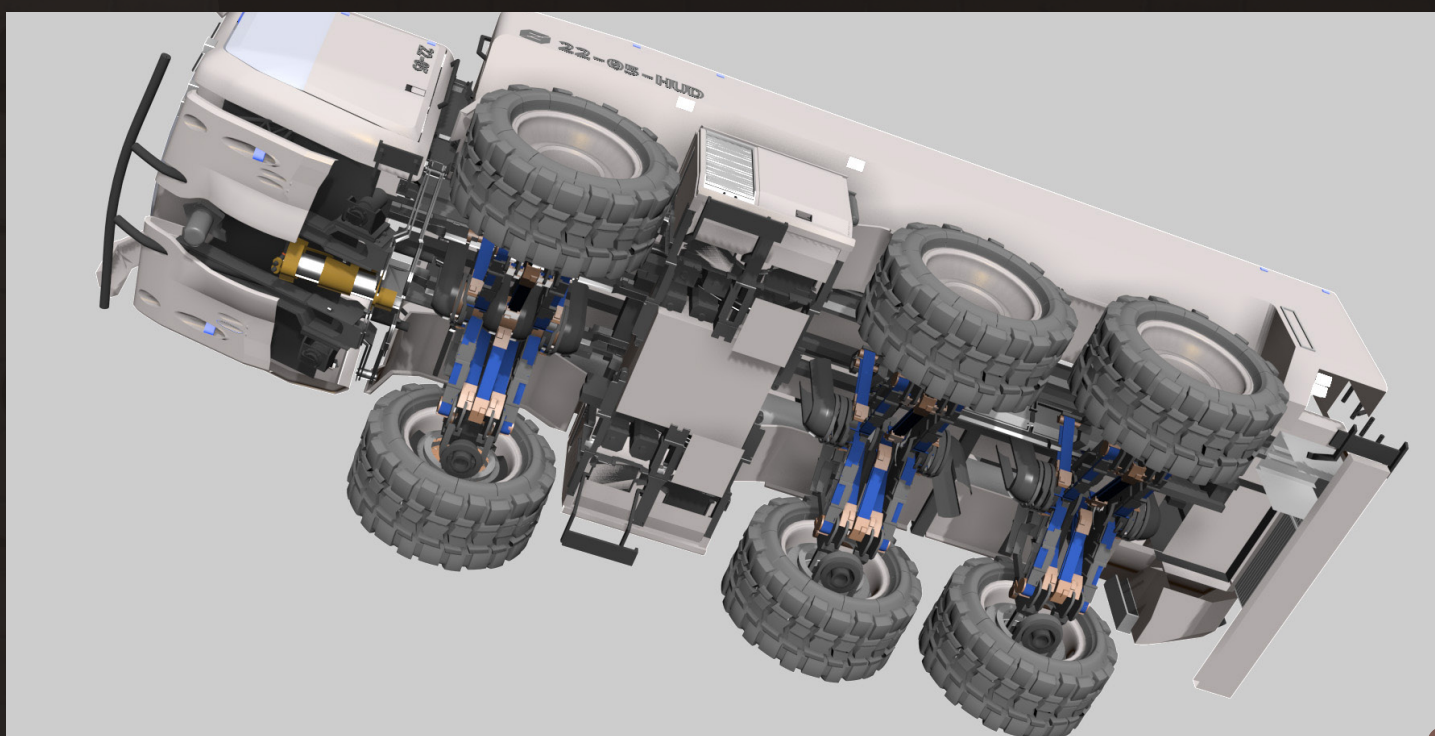
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With what I know from the sketches I can upgrade my mesh; this is basically 70% suspension, which has already been determined in the “undercarriage line work” (Fig.19).

To give the design a bit more feeling I wrap up a concept, which is a mixture of a screen grab, photos and painting; I will complete the design in 3D and render it eventually, but for now a concept is all that is necessary to suggest the vehicle in action (Fig.20).

Mike Hill

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DESIGNING NEW WORLDS

Games and films are made up of many different features such as characters, environments and vehicles, and it is important that all these elements work together to demonstrate a consistent visual language and therefore create a believable environment and society to engage the audience. In this series our artists will take a comprehensive look at creating a new world from a concept perspective, and investigate the processes and techniques that can be used to create all the major features of a game or film.

Chapter 05 – Industrial Facility

Software Used: Photoshop

The Introduction

In this tutorial we shall examine the industrial core of our society. Industrial production is the sleeping giant in our alternative history. The world is at peace, yet the population has demands. An ever-burgeoning world state requires goods to placate the needs and wants of the people. Though with such prolonged peace comes stagnation and complacency. What does this brooding industrial machine look like?

The aim is to create a scene that depicts a lumbering industrial factory, a state-run industrial facility that appears to have been running for eons and is now in a state of slow decay. It's cumbersome, steamy and grinding.

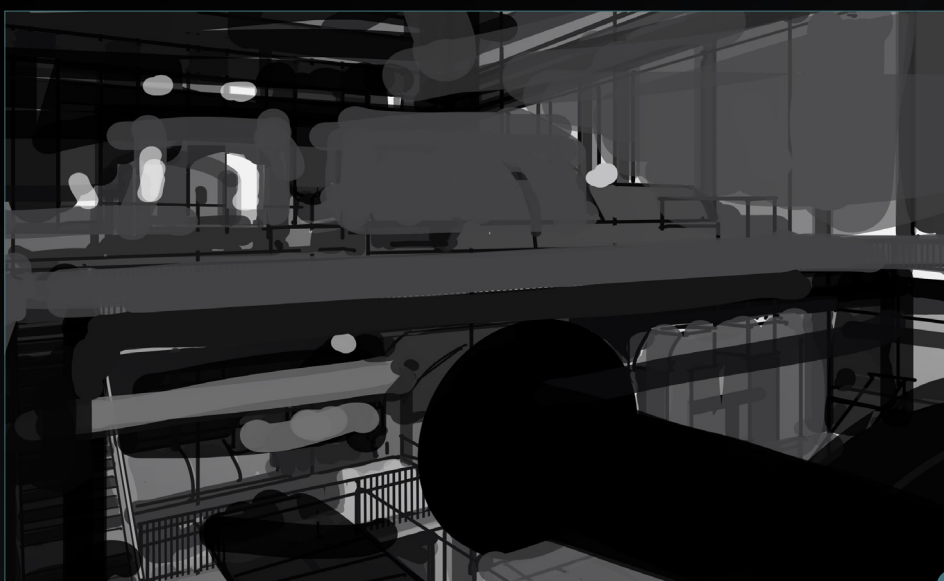
Through this illustration we will explore using color and texture to depict our industrial setting. Furthermore we shall spend some time on "shape theory", the idea of positive and negative space, as well as the effective use of atmosphere in depicting scale and depth.

The Initial Concept

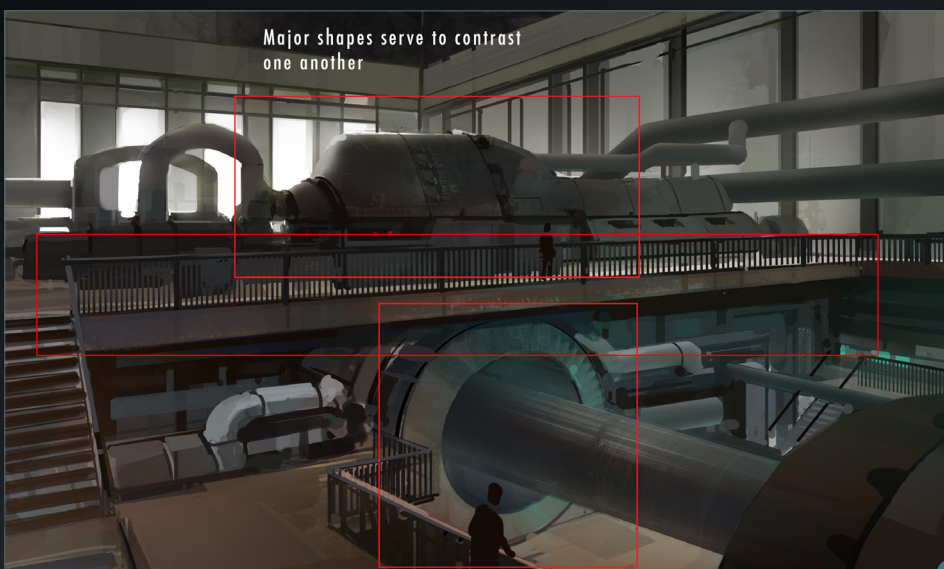
The initial step starts with playing with shapes. Some research has been done, so a loose idea is present. Even at this early stage, care is taken to be mindful of the shapes, which will eventually become our rendered forms. It will be the juxtaposition of these shapes that will start to create interest within our composition (**Fig.01**).

Emphasis is also aimed at creating a sense of scale, with larger shapes in the foreground and smaller shapes as the scene recedes. All of these shapes will eventually be refined to illustrate an array of massive machinery, all pulsing and churning.

Whilst shapes are a focus, any landscape, particularly a scene with many man-made elements, (e.g., machinery), requires accurate perspective, so simple line work helps to establish a sense of perspective. It's critical to get this right from the onset as once the render



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is in process it's extremely time-consuming to rectify errors in the scene's perspective. The trick is to multi-task. Work quickly and loosely, but have an informal perspective grid set up so that the blocking is set in accordance to the perspective established within the image.

Blocking In

Simple shapes are used to block in the composition. The basic shapes will inform the light; light needs a medium to work off. Additionally, the light will begin to define the level of drama in the scene. Essentially it's a double act: shape and light (therefore shadow) work in conjunction to create the basic elements of the composition. This is an important consideration when structuring an interior scene. The space in an interior composition is confined,

that is to say that it is finite, so the spacing of shapes and their inter-relationships is pivotal in the comprehension of the scene and thereby the narrative of the image. Furthermore a dynamic arrangement ensures that the lighting within the image will come easily and naturally.

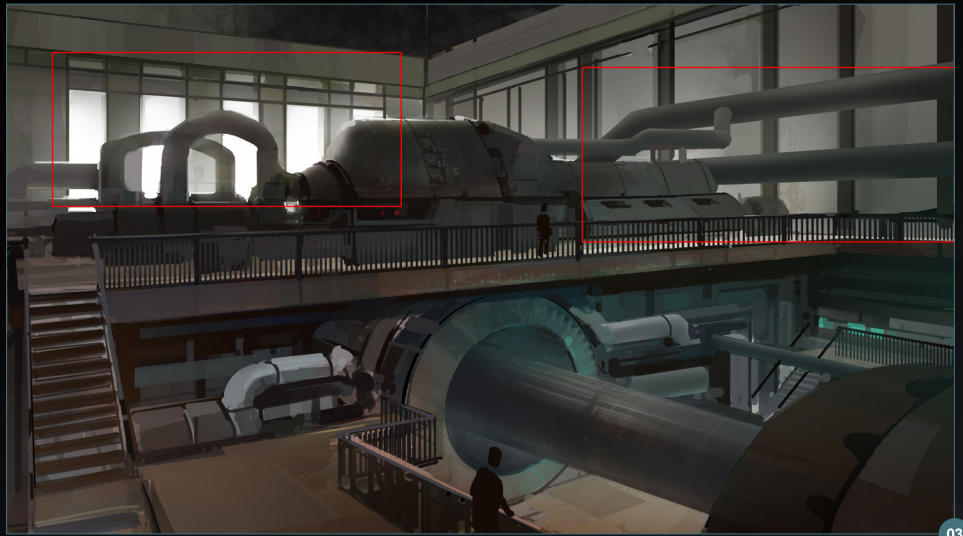
A variety of shapes is a factor to bear in mind. This returns us to the idea of counterpoint. Like light and shadow, the same is true with circles and squares. The two contrary elements provide a means by which contrast in the image can be exploited. The harmonious placement of divergent elements next to one another creates interest via the contrast they create (**Fig.02**).

We can see how, in our scene, there has been an attempt to introduce a variety of shapes;

these correspond to rounded, hard, curved and angular forms. It's when you begin to render the forms that the importance of this variety becomes apparent, as the light affects the shapes differently and allows for dynamic lighting and contrasting edge quality.

When considering shape, or simply when blocking in your composition, some thought should be given to positive and negative space. Any composition will contain both positive space (areas that offer information in terms of forms like machinery) and negative space (areas that do not). Whilst all the pixels in our scene carry information, the notion of positive and negative space is a way to delineate areas that are "active" with actual designed content and those that are not (**Fig.03**).

To be conscious of this is crucial when plotting your composition, as negative areas allow the eye to rest. Any composition cannot be totally full of stuff. Through an informed application of positive and negative spaces, we have greater control over the composition. It helps ensure that the viewer is thoughtfully guided through the scene and is not overcome with stuff or extraneous detail.



The final key aspect of our composition when blocking in is stacking. This is the process whereby elements are sequentially placed within the scene, and where a foreground, mid-ground and background should be clearly established within the image (**Fig.04**).

These elements are kept on separate layers, so that clean alpha channels (or masks) can be created at a later stage. When we begin to light the scene and introduce atmosphere at a later stage, the importance of these masks will be evident.

When a scene is stacked in this manner it facilitates the sense of depth in the image, allowing the viewer to more readily understand that even within an interior space there is depth.

On a quick note, while in the blocking in phase it is also important to establish scale; that is the placement of figures within the scene. This helps the viewer gain an understanding of the proportion within the image, but it also aids in humanizing the scene. People within an environment allow the viewer to engage better with the narrative of an artwork.

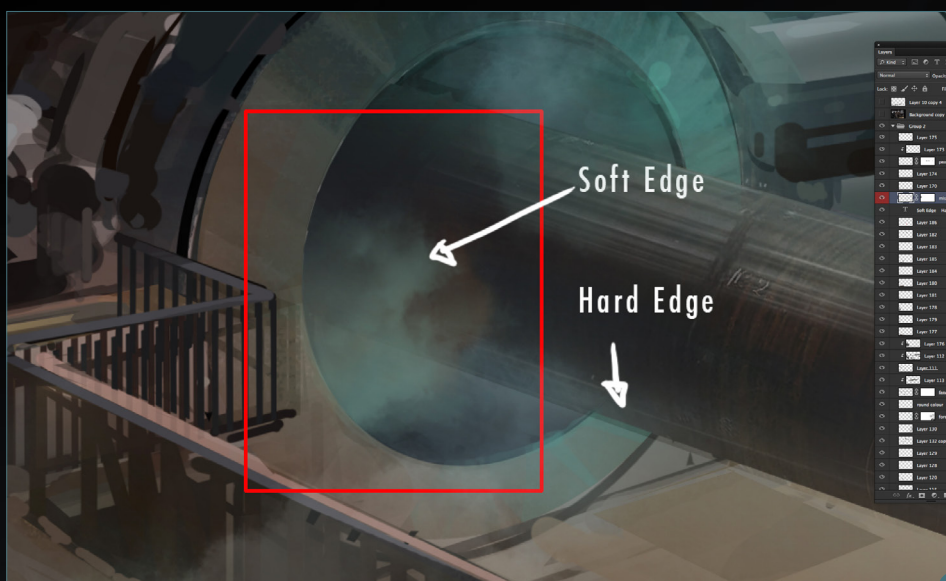


Light and Color

Now that we have all our basic elements in place we can begin to add color and light. The process involves using the masks that have been created. Much like the earlier blocking in stage, we simply select our masks and block in the color. As a general rule it's best to start with the background and move your way forward.

This image will have multiple light sources. We start by blocking in the light from background to foreground, with all the information being kept on separate layers for the inevitable tweaking later. The method is to block it all in with large, simple, hard edged brushes.

Try to avoid using brushes with soft edges; this is for two reason. One, with a hard edged brush you will be generating, by default, interesting and quite serendipitous textures that could lead to specific detail. Two, when we begin to introduce the atmosphere (which is generally executed with an array of medium to soft edged brushes) it has to stand out and you need to be able to clearly differentiate it from the machinery. To achieve this we play with the edge quality. This is what will instill greater



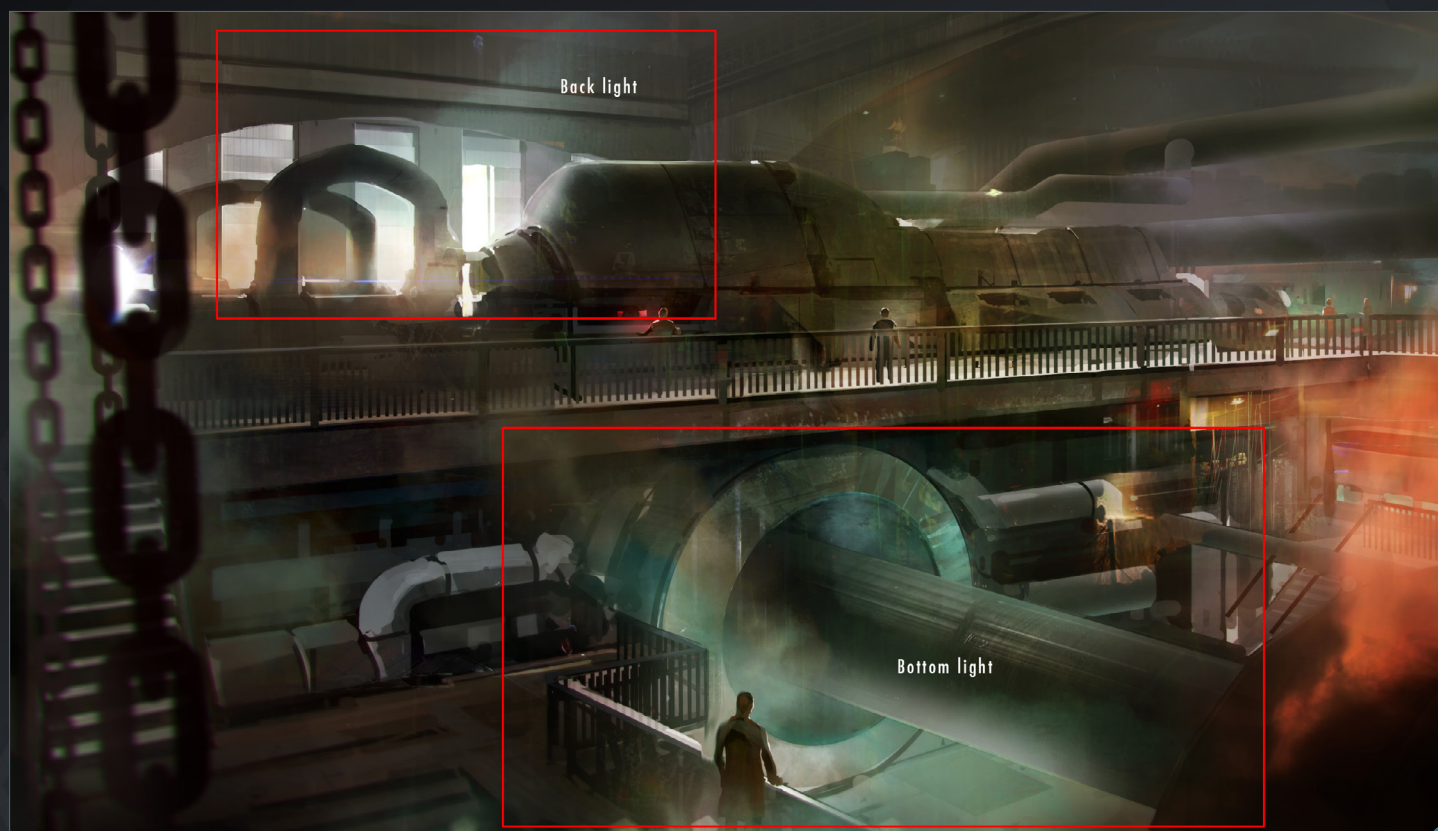
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clarity in the scene; machinery has hard edges, while the steam and atmosphere has soft edges (**Fig.05**).

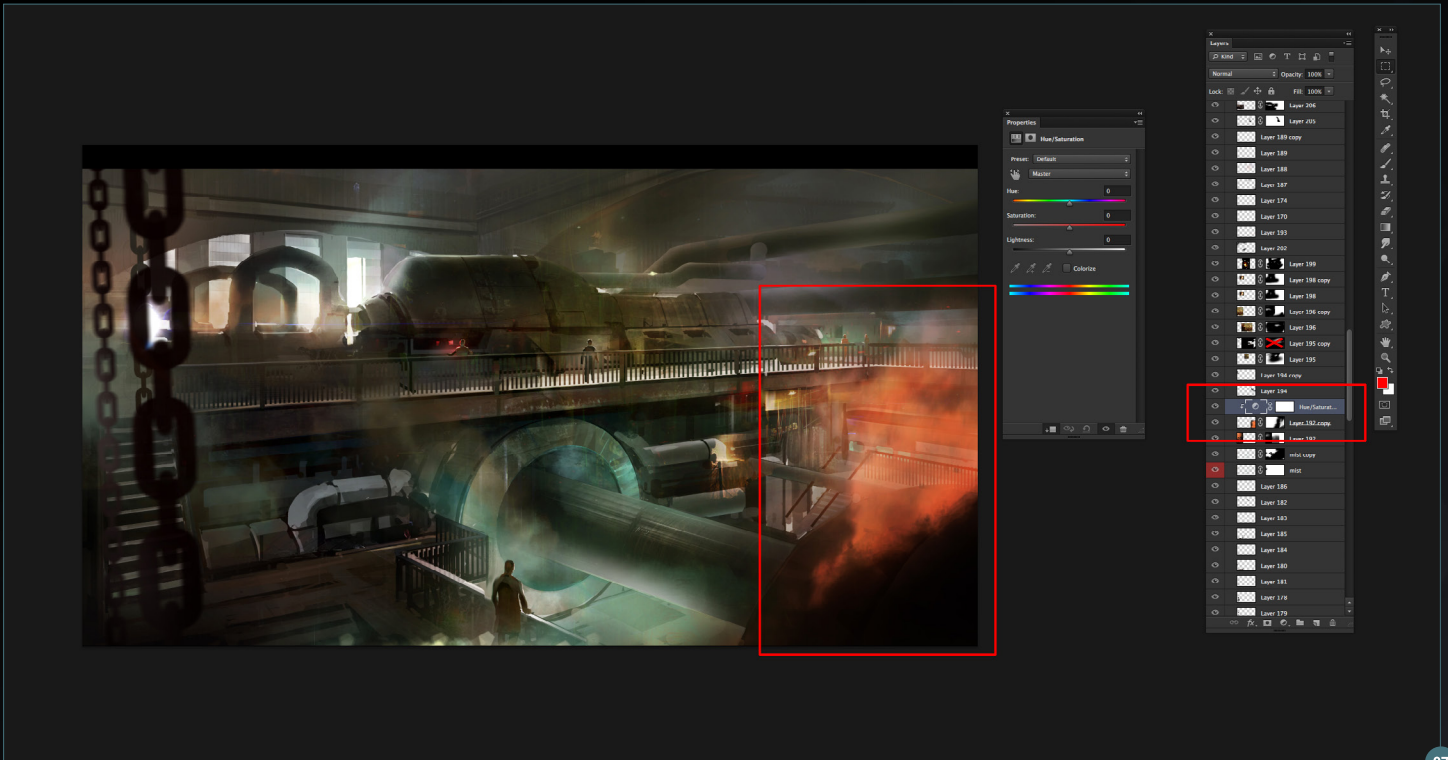
Light will be coming from the back windows, so we know that an aspect of the scene will be back lit. Though we also want to light from the bottom the scene in the mid-ground (**Fig.06**). This is all to be blocked in with broad strokes, so that we can immediately see how the lighting scheme is developing. Furthermore,

we differentiate the color of the light to not only delineate the space, foreground to background, but also to infuse more drama and tension into the space. This is built up gradually, so we have time to experiment with different colors. This is the importance of keeping your light (or colored light) in separate layers.

Once the color has been blocked in, a temporary Hue and Saturation adjustment layer is tagged to the color layer. By playing with the



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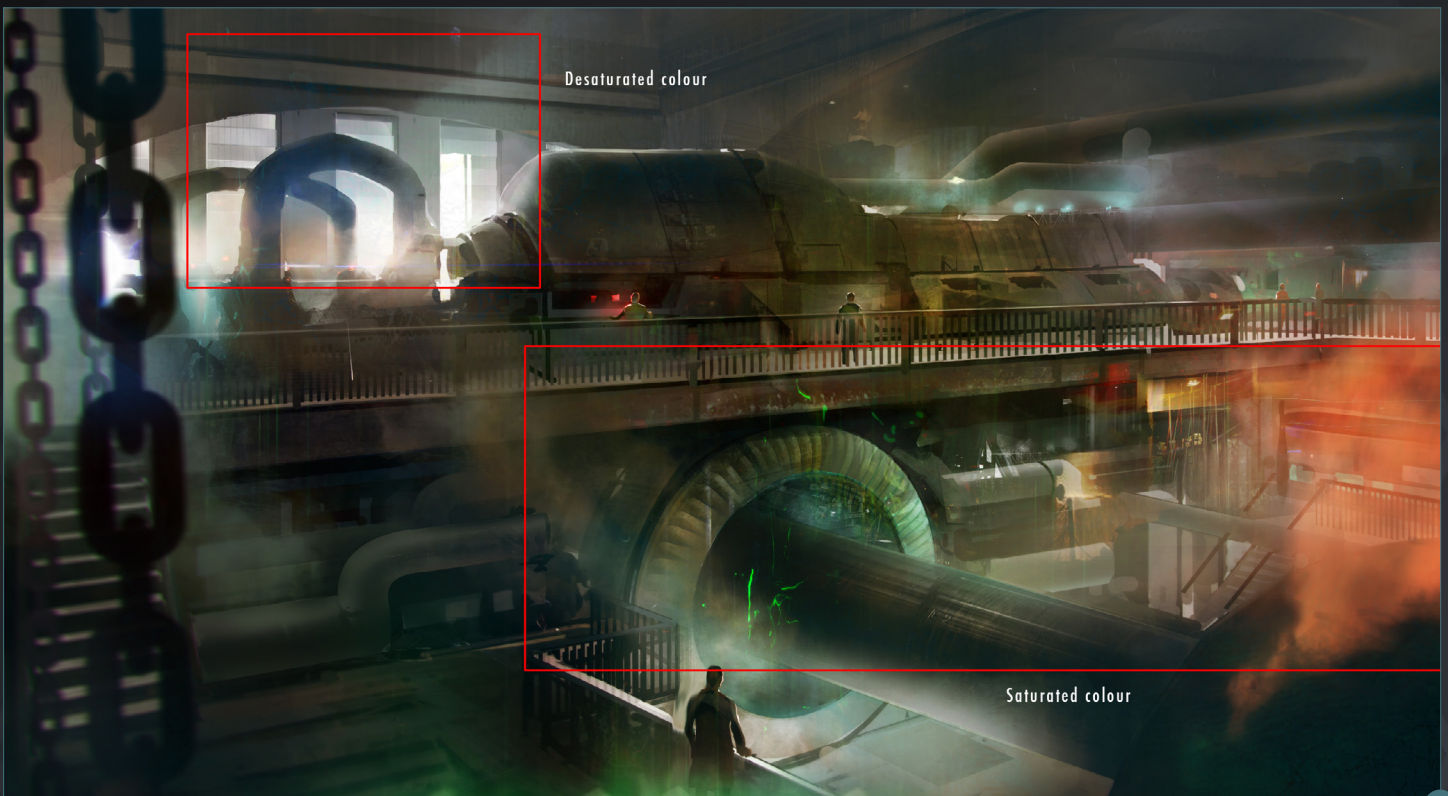
sliders in the Hue and Saturation window, we can gauge what colors work and what do not (Fig.07).

Finally we determine the foreground color. In this instance the scene will have a bold and quite saturated foreground, a green mid-ground

and shall recede into a neutral, though still a little warm, background.

This scheme will aid in reinforcing depth via the stacking of the colors from a saturated foreground to a desaturated background (Fig.08).

Also notice how the values of the color also reflect this; a dark foreground to a lighter background. Obtaining depth within an interior image is critical to articulate that sense of space within our scene. Next we amplify this with the introduction of atmosphere.



08

Atmosphere

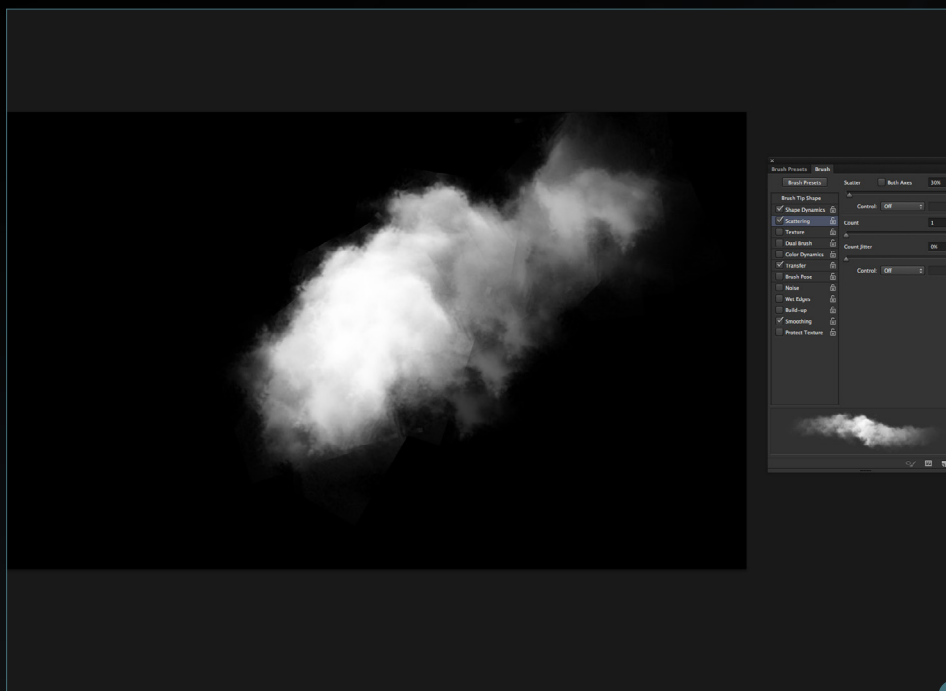
To achieve a more claustrophobic mood and to instill that sense of frenetic action and motion within our scene, we shall introduce atmosphere or, more specifically, steam and smoke. The selection of brushes with medium to soft edges is the key (**Fig.09**).

In addition to the edge quality we also have to simulate randomness. So a simple airbrush will not do. This is best achieved, after the selection of the appropriate brush, with the use of the Scattering (and to some degree the Shape Dynamic brush) feature in the Brushes window.

After we have our brush we can begin to paint in the atmosphere. Start with a low opacity and gradually build up your smoke and steam, all the while modulating its hue, remembering that the lighting scheme we have established would also be reflected in our steam and smoke (**Fig.10**). Once this has been completed we can proceed to the final phase.

Wrapping Up

The final stage is another attempt to tighten the scene further. With a night's rest and



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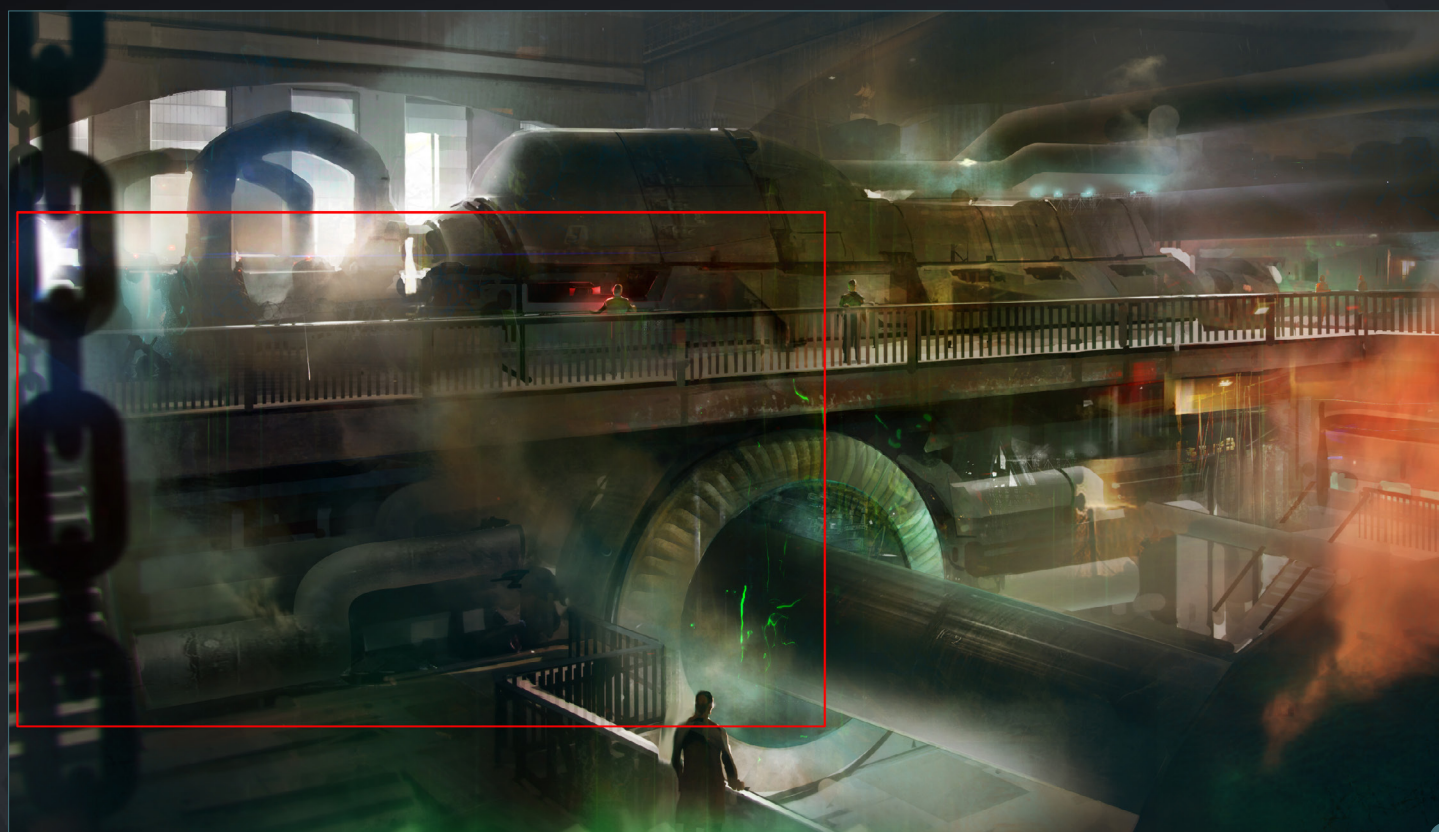
fresh eyes, a series of adjustment layers are employed to see what they may add to the image. For the most part it's a case of tweaking the colors and values with the Curves and Color Balance adjustment layers. Though with experimentation, Selective Color and Espouser can also be fruitful. This is especially true when they are used in tandem with the masks and

alpha channels created earlier. This technique allows for a tremendous amount of control and versatility, and should always be explored.

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10







03 RELIGIOUS LEADER

- COSTUME DESIGN -

Costume design is an important element to character design as it helps to enhance a character's personality. You can create an evolving plot of color, changing social status, or period through the visual design of garments and accessories. In this tutorial series each artist has been presented with a games-like brief describing a character from a certain section of a fantasy medieval world, and they must design clothing suitable for that character's job description.

Chapter 03 – Religious Leader

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

"This is an ageing man who started out in life with good intentions, but has become tainted by the ways of the world and resorted to devious methods to uphold his position and influence those around him. He is a man who harbors a conflict of interests; someone who strives towards the pious and divine, but realizes that in order to gain respect he must also appeal to men's greed and selfishness."

As you can see from the description above, this character has a defined personality with a distinct set of traits. Although the main objective of the tutorial is to design his costume, this should also be taken into consideration.

We can deduce from the title that he is someone who has ascended to the top of his vocation

and hence will wear garments that reflect this status. One could assume that these figures would boast a certain level of adornment and an array of fineries, but this is not necessarily a prerequisite of a religious leader. In fact, the opposite could be true, whereby the figurehead could adopt a lowlier and more humble appearance in keeping with an underlying philosophy and general belief – a good example of this is the Dalai Lama.

Naturally, throughout history, the garments associated with different religions have changed according to the period, but we shall assume that we are portraying someone in the past that belongs to a fictitious religion.

Thumbnails

As with any project, it is necessary to explore a variety of ideas in sketch format before settling on a final design. Usually I begin by trawling the internet for reference pictures, after which I

embark on a series of small sketches, often with no clear idea in mind in order to explore some ideas.

Fig.01 shows just such a sheet with a mixture of both linear and tonal sketches. Whilst doing these I was thinking about both volume and pattern; that is to say I was considering shape and motif, as well as the character's silhouette.

Illustrations 1 and 2 show a repeated motif and focus on rhythms within the costume design that contrast between curved and angular shapes. Number 1 is more curved, employing a circular design echoed across the belt and headwear, whilst number 2 demonstrates a more rectangular design. Illustration 3 concentrates more on volume, with the costume being divided into three distinct sections with less detailing. Some of the other variations employ a combination of both approaches with a handful of drawn in lines.





02

It is always worth experimenting and seeing which approach suits you; some people prefer to work tonally, whilst others choose to draw in line only, but either way is valid.

After considering the various designs I opted for number 4 as a starting point. Quite a few of the sketches had an Oriental quality, especially 4, 5, 6 and 7, whilst numbers 2 and 8 resembled South American themes.

The other consideration was the character's posture, which is somewhat subjective, but I made a few sketches to try out some variations (Fig.02).

In the end I liked the pose of the character on the bottom row, third from the right in Fig.01, and so chose this for my initial character. The one thing I wanted to change was the orientation of the head, which I felt would look better if he was addressing the viewer.

Characters

I did not particularly want to design a character that looked as though he belonged to this world necessarily and I so started with a hybrid, which can be seen in Fig.03.



03

As you can see, I began with a line drawing, which I set to Multiply and then on a new layer, added a color layer beneath this.

I used the line drawing as a guide initially, but once I was happy with the color I began erasing sections. As you can see, the design resembles thumbnail 4, but I decided to reject the hat as this felt a little too Oriental. I adopted the pose from the line drawings in the lower right, which seemed more appropriate and enabled the inclusion of a staff.

As I was unsure about the headwear I chose to block in a random shape. I did toy with the idea of using multicolored garments, but settled on a single color, which I felt gave the costume more impact.

I experimented with various hues and saturation values before deciding on red, but even then I was somewhat indecisive about the type of red. Fig.04 shows two further iterations which differ from the initial pass, but it was the right-hand color scheme that I preferred. You can also



04

see that the headwear has changed although I still wasn't sure about the design at this point. I added some accents of gray to break up the uniformity of the costume, as well as giving the middle section of the robe a more crimson tint to add some subtle variety.

At this stage I began on a second character; of which the initial two phases can be seen in **Fig.05**.

I made a conscious decision to opt for a contrasting color scheme.

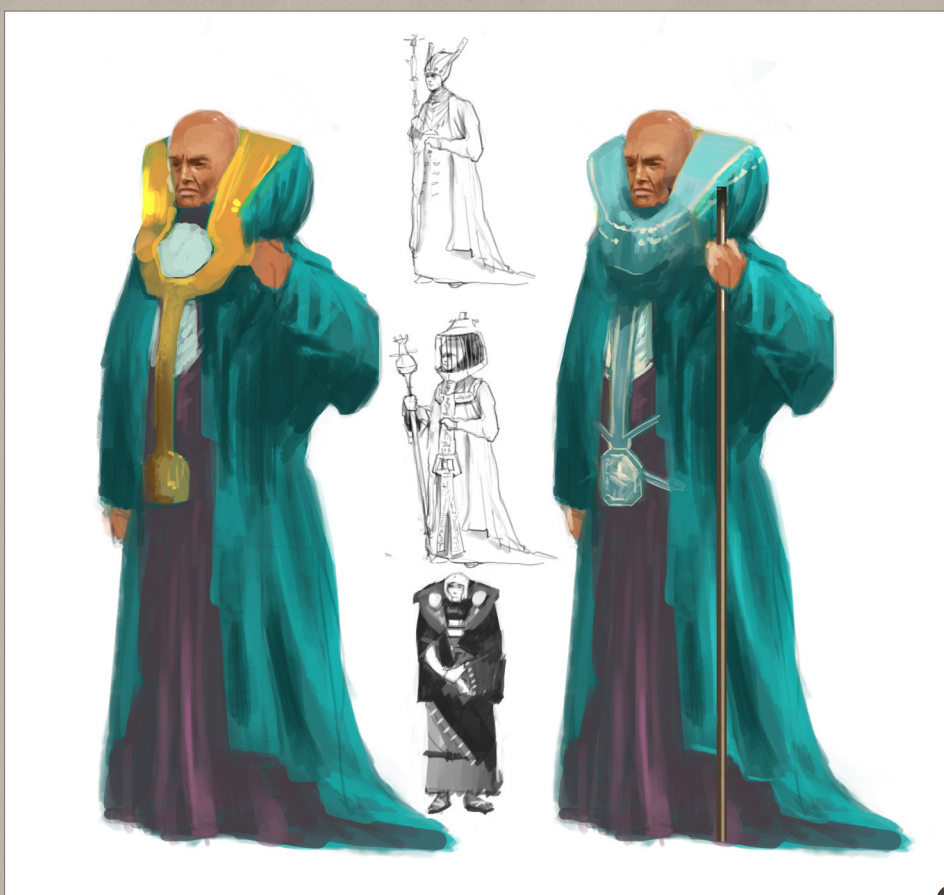
The three small thumbnails evident in the center formed the inspiration here and incorporated the open robe (upper two) and decorative accessory hanging around the neck (middle one). I liked the awkward nature of the high shoulder pads on the lower thumbnail, which seemed to emphasize the face, and so added a similar design into the sketch, which I integrated into the ceremonial fabric around the neck.

I did not feel happy with either the design or gold color and so modified it, creating the version seen on the right. Although this resembled a ruff (prominent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and, as such, not particularly original) I decided to retain it for the time being.

I brought the two characters together at this point to compare them and began working on them together (**Fig.06**).

Taking inspiration from the ruff I began adding segments around the neck, as well as adopting the decorative buttons across the lower section of the robe visible in the upper thumbnail in **Fig.05**.

Once again the headwear was improvised as opposed to being taken directly from any thumbnail and went through a succession of designs. It is safe to say that this aspect proved difficult to resolve, as hinted at by the modification on the left.



05



06

Although the characters were coming along quite well, their presentation felt a little sterile. Quite often I work with an array of brushes including textured ones, but in this case I worked mainly with the default Hard Round and Elliptical brushes.

These are fine, but I find a moderate use of texture helps enrich an image and helps add life to the brush work. As a result I painted in a vague background using a Chalk brush with the Dual Brush preset enabled (**Fig.07**).

Another technique I use occasionally is to overlay a photo to help break up the surface, which in this instance was an image of concrete. It was first color corrected and then set to Soft Light.

I duplicated some of the texture into a new layer and then set the blending mode to Color Dodge at 79% opacity to create a reflective design across the top of the section housing the jewel, as well as the ceremonial staff (**Fig.08**). You can see the difference when you compare the previous two illustrations.

I decided that the second character lacked contrast and was too brightly colored, and so by



08



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way of Curves and a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer, I darkened the robe and added some further shading to the face (**Fig.09**).

I revaluated the headwear on the first character and decided to make some modifications by tightening the width, as well as removing the lateral prongs which looked awkward. The other

change I made was to the right arm, which was too long and so I brought the elbow up marginally (**Fig.10**).

The final refinements incorporated some adjustment layers, namely Levels and Curves for the character in red, and Hue/Saturation and Curves for the other one.

The Curves adjustment was used to increase the contrast on both of them, whilst Levels was used to increase the saturation of the highlights on the red costume. I used Hue/Saturation to do the opposite on our second character, as well as alter the color.

The final version can be seen here in Fig.11.

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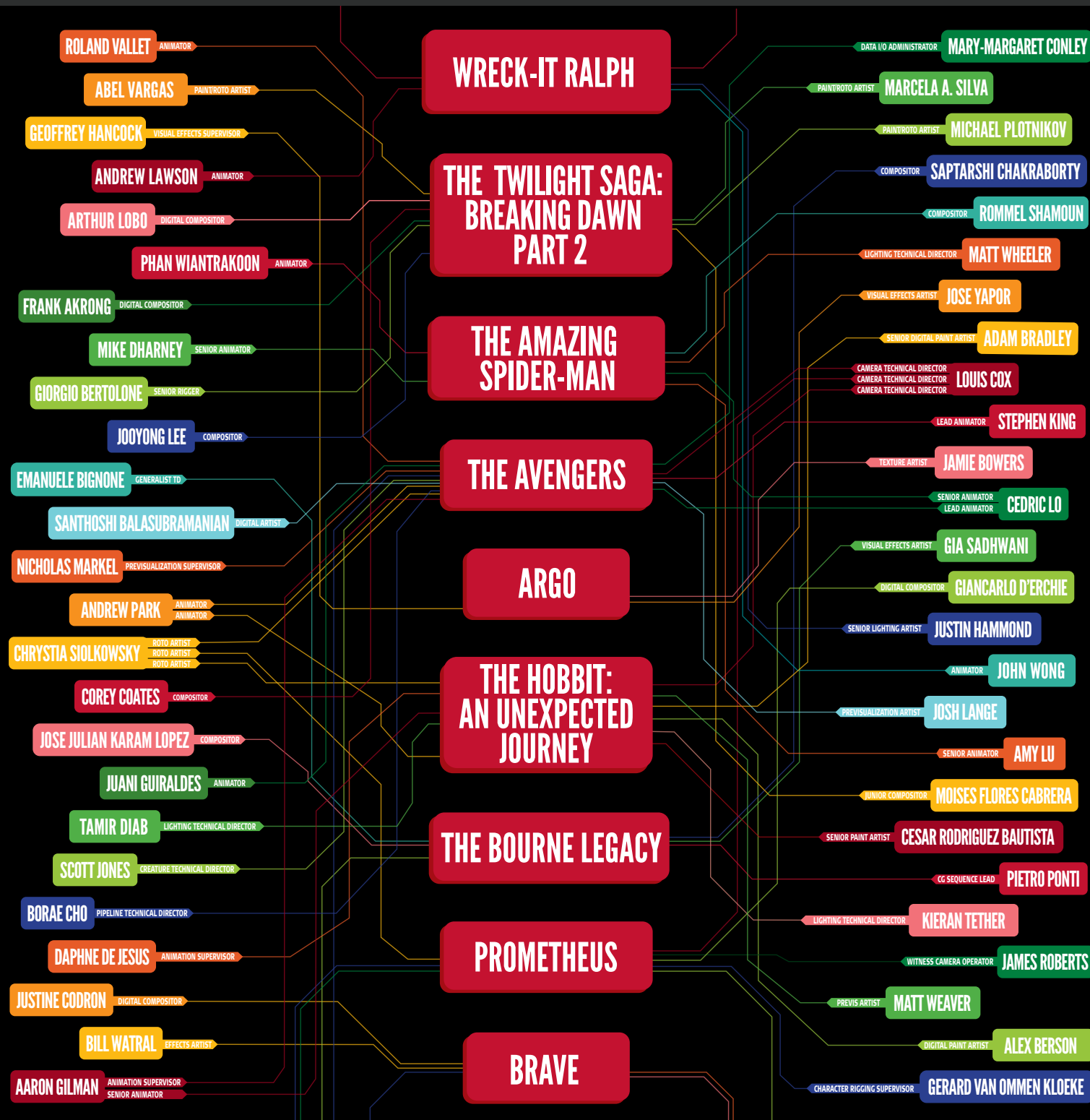
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CREATURE ANATOMY

With the continual development of technology in video games and the wild, imaginative story lines of films, the possibilities of what concept artists are able to produce become broader in detail and function. With strong silhouettes, recognizable color schemes and distinct proportions in anatomy, it is still important to know the basics of animal and human anatomy when designing these creatures. In this three-part series, talented concept artist Vinod Rams demonstrates how to use human anatomy as a basis for creature design, create a hybrid creature based on human and animal anatomy, and use real word examples as a reference for designing a creature from scratch.

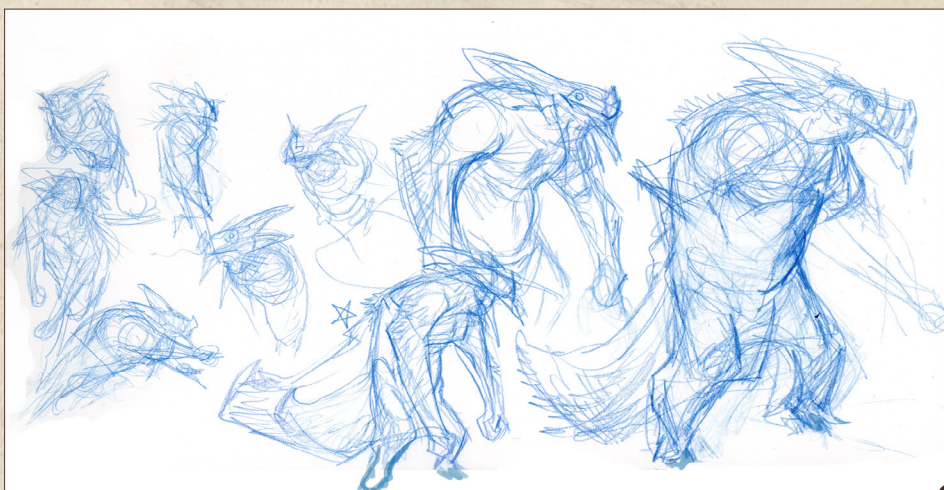
Chapter 03 – Creating Original Creatures

Software Used: Photoshop

When you're designing a creature from scratch, it's still important to reference things in the real world. No matter how odd the creature's anatomical traits are, they will still have some visual cue relating them to something we're all familiar with. For designers like Wayne Barlowe, who use really strange and abstract forms for their creatures, sometimes it's the movements, behaviors or the coloration that is the real-world reference, but it's always there.

After brainstorming what type of creature I want, I do a few roughs. This design is going to be unique because I already have a pretty good idea of what types of shapes I want in my head. It's just a matter of designing it with some personality and locking down the smaller details. I want this guy to have a large, lumbering body; a big tail, a weird, hairless head and a sort of silly, goofy demeanor. I reference armadillos, koalas, bats, bears and, of course, humans. Sometimes it's good to think about what kind of world your creature fits into. I think this guy would look perfectly at home in a Jim Henson movie like *Labyrinth* (Fig.01)!

From the get go I want to establish a strong shape for this character. I want his head to be



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long and narrow, and have all the shapes get bigger and wider as they culminate in his large and heavy tail. I also want to make sure his head has enough interest to be the main focus of the design. Another technique of creature design is repeating certain shapes to create a new design. Having the creature have just two big ears would have been fine, but duplicating the ears so he has four is interesting enough that people will remember the design. Keeping this duplication theme in mind, I give him two thumbs; that's where the theme and rhythm of the design really shows itself (Fig.02).

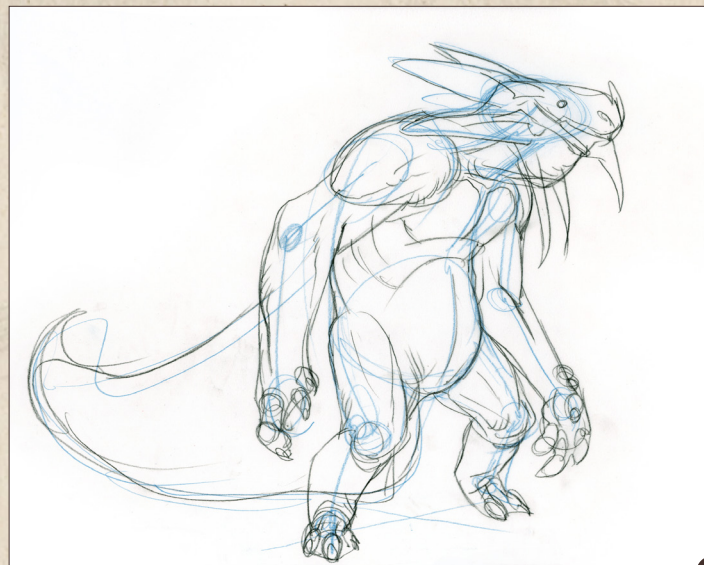
Here I'm starting to establish the musculature. The overall anatomical features on this guy aren't that different from any mammalian creature, but it's the blending of forms that makes the design work.

I make sure to use heavy shapes to reinforce the creature's weight. I start to look at references of bears, sloths and bats (for the head). I also decide I want his head and neck to be hairless, like a vulture – again, I'm using a real-world creature as an anatomy reference. I also have to remember that this guy will be covered in shaggy fur, so areas like his crotch and legs will have a different shape at the end. This sketch is showing off the anatomy, but you should also be thinking of the shapes the fur will be making, even at this early stage (Fig.03).

Finally I start to mark in the fur. A note about drawing fur: fur follows the musculature, which means if you pay attention to the underlying anatomy you can direct which way the fur is "flowing". Keeping this in mind will avoid the "poofy" look when detailing out your creature.



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Also, depending on the style of art you have, you also have to keep in mind how detailed you want to get with the rendering of the fur. You can detail it all out, or just define it by shape. When animators depict fur they use the shape method, but if you were designing a creature for a realistic game or film, you might want to put in more detail. But just like with human hair you never want to draw every strand; shapes are always more important (**Fig.04**).

In the end I've taken a pretty standard bipedal mammalian-based body and added enough variation and "odd" elements to create a unique and interesting character. I think the odd-looking head, strange hands and big fuzzy tail are what people will be drawn to, find appealing and memorable (**Fig.05 – 06**).

I hope these tutorials gave you a little bit of an insight into my drawing and design process. Visit my website and blog for more of my work!

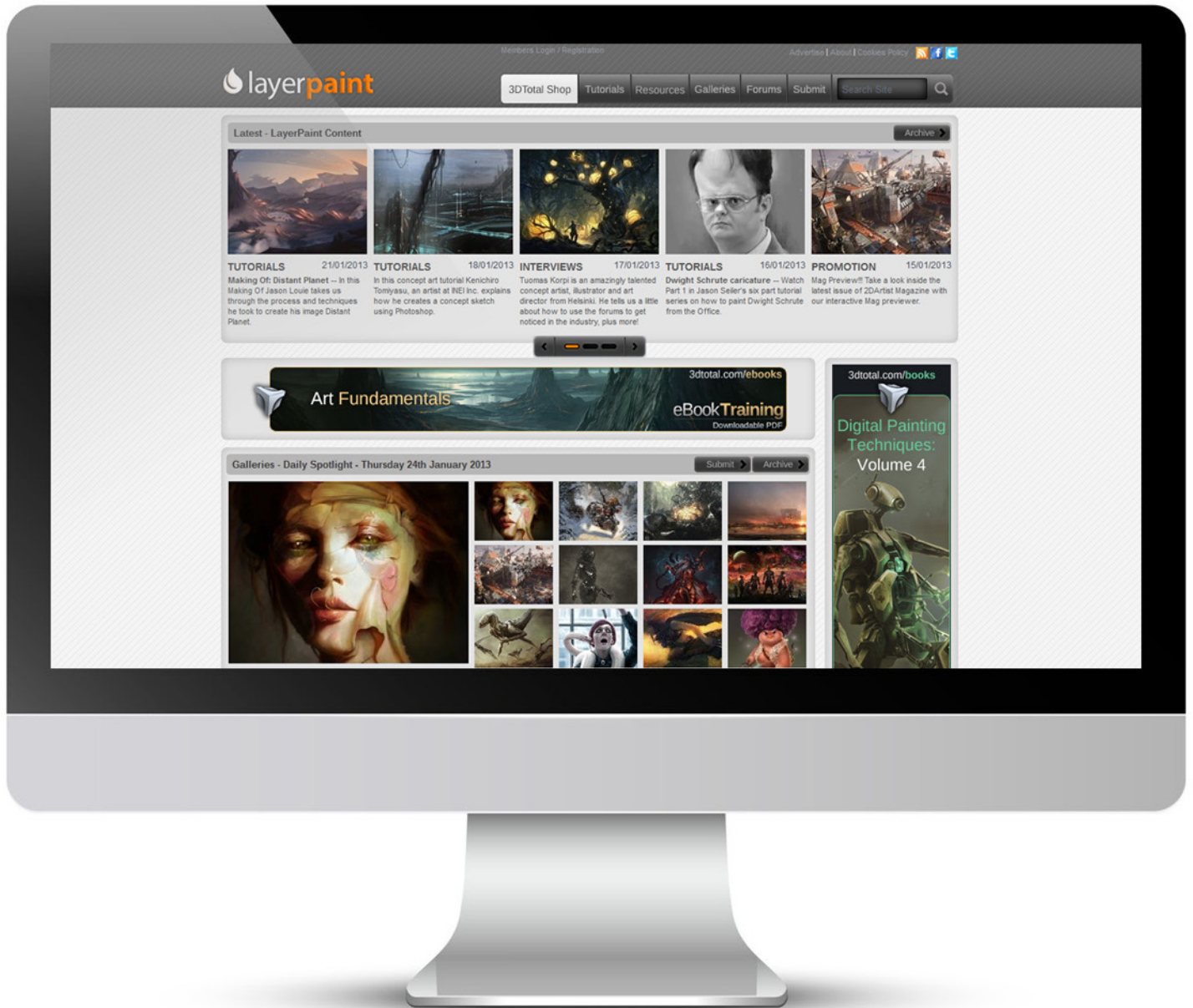
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06



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"As always, it started with some sketching to find the right composition, where parts would be placed and what would enter the frame."

French illustrator and digital painter Khasis Lieb takes us through some of the finer processes in painting his psychedelic portrait. This broad overview is full of useful tips on everything from the concept through to lighting.

ABSINTHE

BY KHASIS LIEB



Absinthe

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

For this image I had an imposed theme:

Absinthe. In France this beverage is well known as "la fée verte" (the green fairy), I thought it would be easy to do an actual green fairy.

So as a portrait lover, I couldn't resist making a psychedelic portrait of an absinthe drinker. It had been a long time since I'd had the chance to do a portrait, so I took this as an opportunity to get back into it!

Sketch

It started with some sketching to find the right composition, where parts would be placed and what would enter the frame, etc. As I wanted to do a portrait, I didn't want the viewer to be too far from the subject, so I managed to keep the face, and the hands holding the bottle and glass in the frame, in a relatively natural way. I wanted the viewer to feel close to the scene, as if the man was at the same table as them (**Fig.01**).

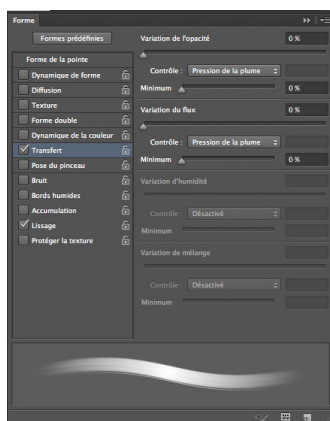
For sketching I usually use the Photoshop brush 24, just tweaked to have the opacity sensible to the pressure, and with a size of 3 – 4 px, to have some variations in my strokes, and be able to make forms quickly (**Fig.02**).

Blocking In

Once I was happy with the framing of the image, I quickly blocked in the areas of lighting that



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I wanted. As I wanted to have multiple light sources, to enhance the beverage, and the expression of my subject, while keeping quite a dark atmosphere, I ended up with a three-light setting in my mind. I like to think as a photographer as I enjoy photography very much. So I thought, "Okay, I'll put a light under the table and the glass (easier in a painting I think), for the green to pop and to light the bottom of the face. Then I'll put a classic light at the left of the image, to reveal the right hand and the side of the face. Finally I'll place a back light to make



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the viewer see the hat, and the overall shape. And there's a funny thing to do with my ears!" At this point I could continue working on the image (Fig.03).

So now it was time for the multiple refining steps. I started with the face, to get the expression right. I took many photo references of myself to get the right expression for the eyes and mouth, etc. And I always had my mirror on my desk to look at details, expressions and

deformations. From doing a lot of portraits and caricatures, I know the eyes are very important pieces for capturing likeness and expression (Fig.04).

I continued to refine the areas. I put less light in the eyes so they draw less attention, as I wanted the viewer's eye to go to the bottle first. And as I work in 3D, I always find that the eyes are too damn bright; it's really unnatural, and it's often these details that make a stunning 3D face



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less believable. So I didn't want to make that mistake in this painting (**Fig.05**).

I refined the bottle again. As the work progressed, I found myself really enjoying making that glass bottle. With all the lights, reflection and refraction, it became a real challenge for me to make the glass realistic (see the detail on the finished image at the end) (**Fig.06**).

I added some levels to make it pop! It also helped to separate the foreground (hands, glass and bottle) from the background. The goal here was to make the viewer's eyes look at the areas I chose, and to "control" their path. It's important to make easily separable planes, to get a real sense of depth (**Fig.07**).

I then tweaked the color balance a little to a warmer green, as I thought it would help create a warm, 1900s absinthe-drinking establishment. I added some smoke behind to cement the suggestion of the type of setting the image is based in. Even in a "character-centric" portrait like this, I think small details, even ones that are almost hard to see, can make a piece more believable to the viewer. To get a feeling that this character is actually somewhere and what kind of atmosphere the place holds (**Fig.08**).



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Final Touches

Some final refinements and last tweaks were made (**Fig.09**), and I was happy with my image.

I hope you found this interesting! I sure found it super-interesting to write, to go back on a creation, putting my workflow into words, explaining why and what I did; a hard exercise, but a really great way of understanding new stuff.

Many thanks to 3DTotal for letting me do this; I'm really grateful for the opportunity.

Khasis Lieb

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Cover image by Tudor Fat

3dtotal.com

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Issue 093 May 2013

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at Vektor Zero

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A person is seen from behind, riding a dark horse across a vast, hazy landscape. In the distance, there are rolling hills and a prominent mountain peak. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds and several birds are flying. The overall color palette is muted, with a lot of greys, blues, and soft pinks, giving it a dreamlike or ethereal feel.

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Introduction

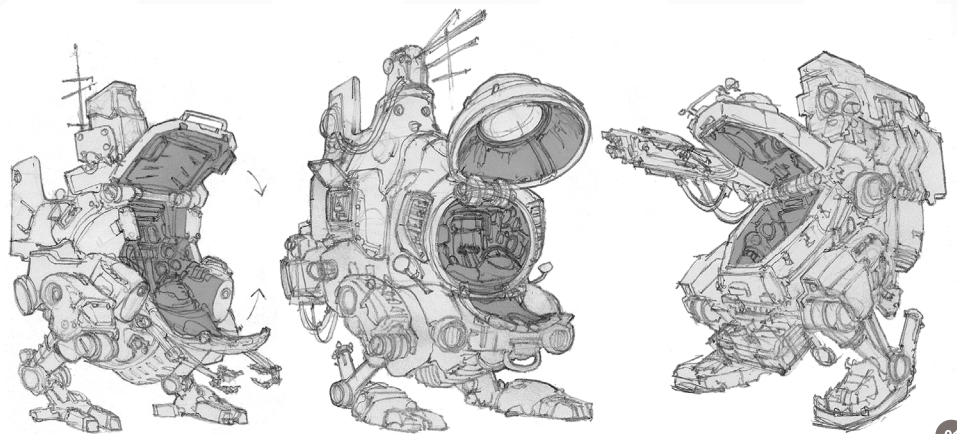
I created this piece for an art show my company put on to showcase the personal projects of its employees. I was very excited to participate and happy that something like this could happen! This was the perfect excuse to create imagery that I loved and have it shown to a (hopefully) willing audience.

The post-apocalyptic genre was the inspiration behind this piece. It's my absolute favorite genre to design for. I had this image floating around in my head for a while; a group of survivors who have joined together, who are all decked out in old worn clothing and make-shift gear, who wander the landscape in an old antique robot looking for other survivors and resources. They've stopped at a gas station in the desert somewhere in previously contested territory, to see if there's any fuel left in the pumps that they might use to continue their journey, wherever it ends up taking them.

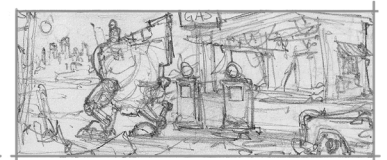
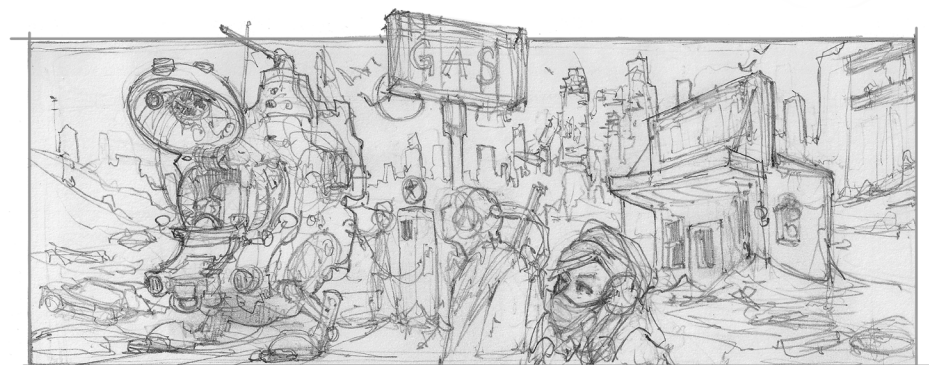
Sketches

There definitely had to be a cool robot somewhere in this piece and I decided to design that first. For this particular design I didn't want it to be a war-like looking mech. Instead it should look like its main purpose is exploration and discovery. I tried to achieve that feeling by combining a submersible design with parts of old 1950s and 1960s cars and trucks. There's a little bit of an old steam locomotive in there too. Also I wanted it to be a little clunky and move like a large dinosaur lumbering across the desert. It should look a little like it is falling apart and the pilot has done the best he can to fix it with whatever parts he manages to scavenge (**Fig.01**).

Next I thought about the characters and what sort of story I was trying to tell here. I knew I wanted one character pumping gas, so it made sense that the rest of the crew would be standing watch, surveying the landscape, looking for enemies, checking the radiation levels and trying to figure out what part of the



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world they've stumbled into. I also wanted to have an eccentric character in a scrappy-looking tech suit decorated with a bunch of random pieces he's scavenged; basically a junk merchant sifting through the wreckage that the crew keeps around because he sometimes finds valuable things.

The next step was to think about the composition. I did several small thumbnails to get started and asked myself, what did I want the main focus to be? Should it be the gas station, robot or the characters? In the end I wanted the characters to lead the viewer's eye into the scene towards the focal point, which would be the robot. In my mind I envisioned a tiny gas station off to the side with the robot

walking around it. Two main characters are cautiously making their way down the road in the middle of the piece, with the gas station sign in the middle. A friend advised me to move the gas station sign over, since it was a vertical element that divided the piece in half (**Fig.02**).

Once the elements were ironed out, I needed to complete a final drawing before I started painting (**Fig.03**). The drawing itself is a little rough and ended up being a strange abomination of a pencil and digital drawing, but I wanted to be sure that all the designs were well thought out so I knew what I was painting. After checking my perspective and scale references I was ready to move on to color.



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Painting

It was then time to choose a color palette. I did a few fast studies for color and lighting. Once again, in my mind, I pictured it to be either early morning or dusk to get those really warm oranges and browns in the desert rocks, as well as the nice cool blues in the shadows. I also tried a stormy scene, with dark radiated storm/ash clouds hovering in the distance, but

that wasn't quite the look I was going for in this particular piece (**Fig.04 – 06**).

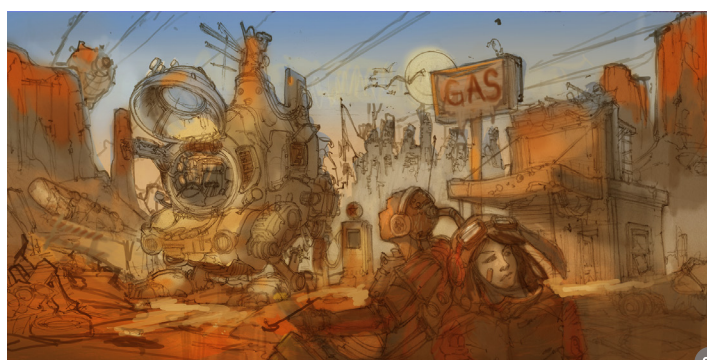
After receiving some fantastic feedback from my co-workers I settled on a scenario where the foreground would be in shadow, the mid-ground would be hit by late evening light and the background would be in shadow with the tops of the mountains illuminated. The front of the mech

would be lit, while the side would fade into cool shadow. The characters would be in shadow too since they're in the foreground, creating a focal point around the robot (**Fig.07**).

At this point I was feeling confident about how the piece was progressing so I began to tighten the whole thing up, moving around the piece as a whole and not being caught up for too long



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in any particular area. I constantly added detail and then faded it back, catching myself ruining my lighting scenario. If I felt like I was losing detail, I went back in on a layer on top, re-drew certain areas and then rendered those out to be sure I wouldn't lose them. I usually stick to just a few brushes when I'm working; one Hard Round, one airbrush and maybe three or four textured brushes (**Fig.08**).

It was suggested to me that by having the characters in the middle of the image they cut the piece in half and made the viewer feel like the painting was cropped in a strange way, as though there was something important happening off-screen that wasn't shown. This was something I had been fighting with for a while, so I added some room to my canvas and moved the characters over to the right, framing

the scene and leading the viewer's eye into it from that side. Adding to the story and history, I worked in a burned out husk of a battle mech, possibly from a rival faction (**Fig.09**).

I was satisfied with all of the overall shapes and masses, and how everything was organized. Now I just needed to continue to render out the forms and sharpen the edges of the most



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important elements. I filled in the details of the gas station, indicating some items in the windows and having them boarded up as if there was a last stand/shoot-out there at some point. I also added a cable/hose snaking in from the right side, leading into the scene (**Fig.10**).

I finished rendering the robot, tightened up the foreground elements, detailed the wrecked car and debris on the left side, and completed the rendering on the characters' faces. In addition,

I finalized the shapes of the mountains, and tweaked their color and texture. Something was needed to illuminate the main guy's face a bit to set him apart from the dark area around him, so I added some light coming from the radiation meter/Geiger counter he's holding (**Fig.11**).

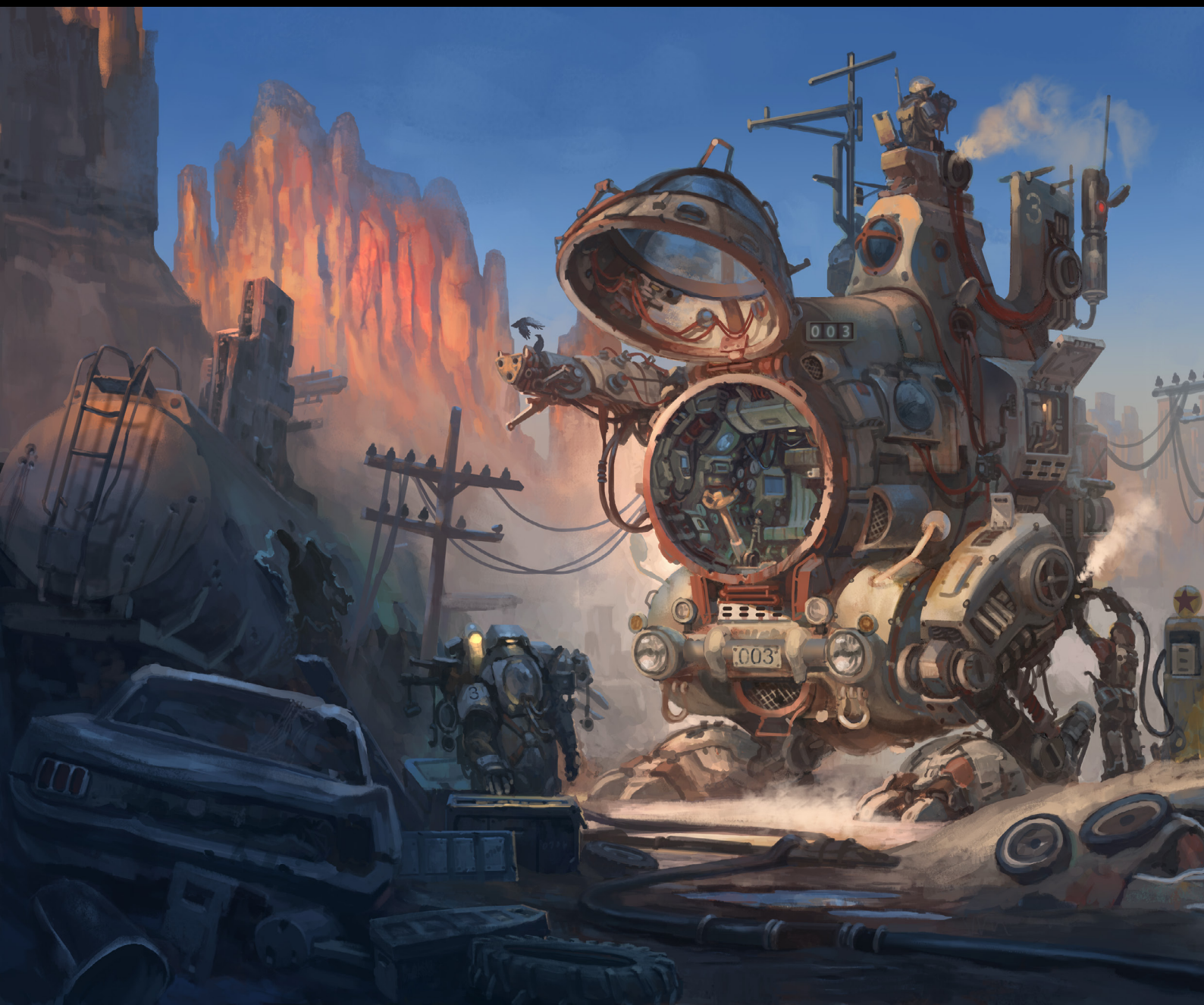
I cleaned up the edges of the robot, the characters and some of the foreground elements, and then added in some atmospheric perspective on the mountains, as well as the

destroyed battle mech in the distance, to push those elements back a bit. After doing a few more slight color adjustments I was feeling content enough to call this one finished (for now). I enjoyed every step of creating this painting and I'm looking forward to seeing how people react to it!

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